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Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7703rd meeting

Tuesday, 31 May 2016, 10.35 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Aboulatta	(Egypt)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	China	Mr. Shen Bo
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Japan	Mr. Okamura
	Malaysia	Mrs. Adnin
	New Zealand	Mr. Taula
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Spain	Mr. González de Linares Palou
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Suárez Moreno

Agenda

Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2010/507)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2010/507)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Mr. Iliichev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would first like to express our sincere gratitude to you personally, Mr. President, and to your team, for the capable leadership and full programme of work you brought to the Security Council this month.

A considerable amount of time has been allotted in May to African issues and to discussing ways of arriving at collaborative solutions to the crises on that continent. As we have said in the Security Council more than once, for us one of the key principles in that context is finding African solutions to African problems. In that regard, we truly appreciate the efforts of the Egyptian and Angolan delegations in convening, on 23 May, the scheduled consultative meeting between the Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, and we commend the importance and timeliness of the holding of an informal segment of the meeting for the first time. It enabled us to conduct a frank and constructive analysis of the current condition of and prospects for cooperation between the two Councils, as well as between the United Nations and the African Union in general, in the maintenance of peace and security. We also discussed country-specific topics of interest.

It was not an easy discussion, but we value the fact that there was no attempt to conceal the existence of various problems in the relationship between the two Councils and that suggestions were made for concrete ways to overcome them. In particular, we acknowledged the importance of ensuring that our consultative meetings are more effective, including improving the effectiveness of our mechanisms for implementing decisions. One especially interesting discussion was on the possibility of organizing joint missions of the two Councils in the field.

The consultative meeting was organically complemented by the holding the next day of an open debate on the issue of cooperation on security between the United Nations and the African Union (S/PV.7694), in which about 50 delegations took part, and at which we adopted presidential statement S/PRST/2016/8 on the subject. In our view, such activities have become a major milestone in our efforts to strengthen the strategic partnership between the two organizations, as well as between the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council, on the basis of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations and a foundation of genuine mutual respect. This assumes the Security Council's primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and the complementarity between the work of the United Nations and regional organizations, in which each can capitalize on its relative advantages.

Your commitment to the quest for solutions for Africa, Mr. President, was also apparent in full measure in your organization of the Security Council's mission to Kenya and Somalia. We are grateful to Cairo for the hospitality shown to the members of the Council in the Egyptian capital and at the headquarters of the League of Arab States. During that visit, the members of the Council met with the high political representation of Somalia, Kenya and Egypt, received first-hand information on the situation in those countries and in the region as a whole and exchanged views and assessments of many issues on the international agenda. All of the meetings took place in a businesslike and constructive manner and were very well organized.

I would like to say a few words about the situation in Somalia and the challenges that country is facing. We welcome the adoption of the election model, which is aimed at ensuring national reconciliation and uniting the country. The Council members' visit to Mogadishu and the negotiations that took place there served to encourage the Head of State to approve the election model.

However, with regard to establishing a political process in Somalia, we need to be cautious. We must not be hasty in advancing dubious models that could lead to a division of the country. In that context, we should continue to strengthen the unity of Somalia and help to establish an effective Government, army and security force as well as economic reconstruction, in addition to effective ways of combating terrorism.

The visit also demonstrated that Somalia has some promising prospects, but the terrorist problem remains very serious. Thanks to a coordinated, successful operation by African peacekeepers, Al-Shabaab has been contained. However, the terrorists continue to control a significant part of the territory and key roads. Clearly, terrorist groups are receiving external assistance from many sources — material, technical, military and man-power. Foreign terrorist fighters are flocking to the country. That support is being provided at a faster rate than support is being provided to the central authorities and the Somali army and police.

Today the only effective mechanism in addressing the terrorism challenge to the country is the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), whose mandate was unanimously extended by resolution 2289 (2016) until 8 July. We should take account also of the fact that African peacekeepers must deal with broader problems than provided for in their mandates, and with a risk to their own lives. In that connection, we need vigorously to address the issues of AMISOM's capacity. We call for further enhancement by the international community of its support to the Mission in military, financial and logistical terms.

The efforts by the international community to resolve the problems in Somalia are a clear example of practical cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union in ensuring peace and security. For that reason, we consider the the Egyptian leadership of the Security Council mission to the country and the conceptual dialogue between the two organizations to have been were very well organized and results-oriented. We are confident that the Council's work should be built on such approaches.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset to thank and warmly congratulate Ambassador Amr Abdellatif Aboulatta and the entire Egyptian team for all of their work this month. With great professionalism, they led us through a month that was very busy in every way, particularly with meetings with regional organizations — with the African Union (AU) all of last week and with the Arab League in Cairo, which was a first, as well as with the European Union.

Mr. President, as you have invited us to do, I will address only three of the topics on the agenda of the Council this month. I would like also to say a few words about the main deadlines that we can expect during the month of June.

Mr. President, let me begin by saying that you started off your presidency with a major event, imperative for all of us: the adoption of resolution 2286 (2016), on the protection of medical personnel in armed conflict. Attacks against hospitals have increased in recent years in Syria, Yemen, South Sudan, Afghanistan and elsewhere. We deem it very important that the Council has sent a strong message, and we will have to provide strict follow-up of the resolution in order to ensure that such violations of international humanitarian law do not go unpunished. France will remain mobilized in that regard.

Turning now to the Middle East, I would like to come back to the issue of Syria and to the peace process. The adoption of resolutions 2254 (2015) and 2268 (2016) made it possible to see some progress in resolving the Syrian crisis. After very positive dynamics in March, early May saw a loss of ground. The Geneva talks were suspended and violence resumed, hitting Aleppo even harder than before the coming into force of the cessation of hostilities.

Humanitarian access was very minimal in its progress owing to the siege imposed by the regime, of which Daraya has become a symbol. Given this series of negative developments, the Special Envoy, supported by France and other delegations, called for the holding of another ministerial-level meeting of the International Syria Support Group (ISSG). The Vienna communiqué adopted on 17 May made it possible to reaffirm the commitment of ISSG members to creating the conditions for a credible resumption of negotiations. Most importantly, the communiqué unambiguously reaffirmed the need for the next round of negotiations to focus just on the transition and its modalities for implementation, and this by 1 August.

To date, progress is still minimal, as confirmed by the Special Envoy during the consultations held on 26 May. While the goal of a resumption of political negotiations has been set, we should not be too hasty regarding a fresh inter-Syrian round of talks if conditions to ensure their credibility have not been met. The next few days should focus on the effective implementation of the 17 May communiqué, using, if necessary, those tools that have been agreed to, that is, a ministerial-level meeting of the ISSG and the Security Council.

In the immediate term, the main issue is humanitarian access. If impediments to humanitarian convoys to all areas under siege are not lifted before June 1, we will have to begin humanitarian air drops. After five meetings of the ISSG and two Security Council resolutions, we should be seeing some real progress in this regard.

Turning now to the peace process, to which we drew the Council's attention on 15 May, we hope that the ministerial-level meeting that we will be holding in Paris on 3 June will make it possible to give a new political horizon for the two-State solution. France has for several months seen the threat of generalized unrest on the ground. That threat is increasing on a daily basis owing to the daily injustices suffered by the Palestinians and the increasing insecurity of the Israelis.

That French initiative was the subject of extensive consultations, as the Minister for Foreign Affairs in April and the Prime Minister last week both visited Israel and the Palestinian territories. The Minister also consulted with our partners in the region and the Quartet in order to build a broad-based consensus. The ministerial-level meeting to be held on 3 June in Paris must be the starting point for political mobilization. The President of the Republic, François Hollande, will open the meeting, in which the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the United States Secretary of State have already confirmed their participation.

Our approach is collective and complementary to the action undertaken by the Quartet, whose upcoming report should provide important information for moving forward. We thank the very large majority of Council delegations as well as others that have supported and continue to support our efforts.

I cannot mention the month of May in the Security Council without revisiting some of the significant events that made it possible for the Security Council to interact with regional organizations, particularly the African Union, throughout the past week. The Council's meetings with the AU Peace and Security Council and the League of Arab States during its trip to Cairo and with the European Union's Political and Security Committee have reaffirmed the importance of cooperation with regional organizations and to promote mutual understanding of the crises of the day.

On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of consultations with the African Union, we must remain resolutely engaged in bolstering this strategic partnership. The effectiveness of United Nations action, like that of the African Union, cannot but be improved through that. In that regard, we welcome the Egyptian presidency's initiative in organizing a Council trip to Somalia, a case in which good cooperation with the African Union is essential to promoting peace and security in the region. That field mission and consultations with the African Union will enable us to better adjust the mandate of the African Union Mission in Somalia, which we will renew in a few weeks, in terms of both offensive actions and respect for human rights.

In conclusion, let me say a few words about the main priorities of our presidency, which begins tomorrow. It will be an extremely busy month of activities for the Council, which we can organize into three main pillars.

First, peacekeeping will serve as the veritable backbone of the month of June. With the ministerial debate on 10 June, led by Minister for Foreign Affairs Jean-Marc Ayrault, we will together take the opportunity to deepen, in the presence of the Secretary-General and the President-elect of the Central African Republic, our understanding of effective and modern peacekeeping in protecting civilians. The exchange will enable us to set the tone of a month will that will be particularly active in the area of renewing peacekeeping mandates, including those of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force in the Golan Heights, and the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, without mentioning the anticipated results of the strategic review of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic. That is to say, Africa will be at the heart of our presidency.

Secondly, the month of June will also be marked by many important deadlines with regard to the Middle East, including Syria, of course, in all its dimensions — political, chemical and humanitarian. Libya will also be on the agenda, along with Yemen and the peace process, which I have already mentioned. In late June, the Security Council will also receive the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) on Lebanon. June will also be very active with regard to elections in the United Nations. Specifically, we will elect new members of the Council on 28 June.

Lastly, a word on the process of the election of the Secretary-General. The General Assembly will organize new informal dialogues between the candidates and Member States on 7 June. As in April, I am certain that they will elicit very strong interest on the part of Member States. We commend and encourage this welcome opening. It will be up to the Council to move ahead with its own work within the framework of its responsibilities. In that regard, I thank Ambassador Aboulatta of Egypt for the constructive discussions undertaken under his presidency. It is in that spirit that we will work during our June presidency to ensure the organization and all necessary arrangements for the Council to proceed to the initial voting ballots at the appropriate time.

Again, I thank and congratulate the Egyptian presidency for the high quality of the work in May. You have set the bar very high, Sir.

Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola): I would very much like to warmly congratulate you, Mr. President, for your remarkable presidency of the Council during the month of May. I also wish to congratulate your team on the very excellent performance of the Council and for the results achieved in our common endeavour to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security.

A tangible result of the Egyptian presidency was the progress achieved in the Security Council mission to Somalia and East Africa, which was able to ensure — with the assurance of and delivery by the Somali leadership — that elections will take place according to the agreed model under the set deadline. It is now expected that the international community will assist the Somali authorities in ensuring that elections take place in the best possible conditions, which will represent a substantial contribution to the complex political and security process the country has been going through.

The Security Council's mission to East Africa also included important meetings in Kenya and Egypt. In a meeting held in Nairobi with the President of Kenya and Kenyan high officials, concerns were raised on the future of African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and on the Somali refugees in Kenya. The Kenyan authorities stressed the correlations between the participation of Kenya in AMISOM and Kenyan national security, and the crucial need for greater United Nations support to AMISOM, a matter concerning which the serious attention of the Council is required. We thank you very much, Mr. President, for putting emphasis on that during the mission to Somalia.

The presence of a considerable number of Somali refugees in Kenya poses a huge security, economic and environmental burden on Kenyan authorities. In that connection, an appeal for the assumption of the principle of shared responsibility was addressed to the international community through the Council's call for support for countries enduring the massive influx of Somali refugees, of course including in Kenya. Those two issues, AMISOM and refugees, justify the Council's renewed attention in order to preserve the gains so far achieved in Somalia and to avoid undesirable developments in case a suitable solution is not found to the refugee issue.

The tenth joint consultative meeting between the United Nations Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council (see S/PV.7694) was another important achievement of the Egyptian presidency. The meeting was an opportunity for both Councils to reaffirm and to find ways to strengthen cooperation, complementarities and commitments in addressing threats to international peace and security in Africa. At the formal meeting held at the Permanent Mission of Egypt to the United Nations, the two Councils assessed the existing partnership at the strategic and operational levels and the need to improve the exchange of information and analysis in all phases of conflict, and discussed the financial, logistical and operational challenges of peacekeeping missions in Africa.

The two Councils also discussed the impact of the three reviews under way of United Nations peace operations, the peacebuilding architecture, and resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security. In the formal meeting, the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council discussed the situation in Somalia and Burundi. A candid exchange of views took place, with the two Councils reiterating their support and contribution to those countries on the path to lasting peace.

Since it was established in 2004, African Union Peace and Security Council has deployed or authorized almost 70,000 uniformed peacekeepers to missions in Africa, including the Regional Task Force for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army and the Multinational Joint Task Force set up to fight Boko Haram. Moreover, the African Union established

AMISOM, the hybrid Mission with which we had contact in Somalia.

Despite financial and logistical constraints, the deployment of peacekeeping missions by the African Union Peace and Security Council has been instrumental in supporting the Security Council. Cooperation between the two Councils is based on practical analysis of the African Union's comparative advantages in terms of proximity to the political, social, economic, religious, ethnic and other dimensions of African conflicts. That framework could guide the Security Council in establishing the basis for effective cooperation with the League of the Arab States — a wish strongly expressed by both parties in the meeting held in Cairo on 21 May, when the Security Council mission and the League of Arab States held their first consultative meeting. It is our view that the League of Arab States can make a meaningful and significant contribution to the peacebuilding process in Somalia, which is a member of the Arab League. Both secretariats at the United Nations and the League of Arab States could start discussions on how to operationalize such a partnership, which, in our view, could yield important results in the security, political, social and economic processes under way in Somalia.

In conclusion, I once again reiterate our sincere appreciation to you, Mr. President, for the very skilful way you have conducted the Council during the month of May. We look forward to the French presidency, of which the Ambassador of France has just presented the first outlines to the Council, and we look forward to continue working together with him.

Mr. Suárez Moreno (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela would like to recognize the work done by you and your team in advancing the agenda this month. We also welcome the holding of this public wrap-up meeting, in line with the provisions of presidential concept note S/2010/507. Similarly, we appreciate the concept paper prepared by your delegation for this meeting. We have extracted two points on which we wish to dwell. The first refers to terrorism and the second to regional cooperation.

Vulnerability to terrorism and violent extremism is now global in nature. It is manifested, inter alia, in the existence of more than 30,000 foreign terrorist fighters, including young people and women, from at least 100 countries around the globe. Today, no single region of the world can consider itself free of that phenomenon, much less of the terrorist scourge. In that regard, Venezuela has insisted that the joint role of the Security Council and the international community will be decisive in combating those threats, particularly through the design, implementation and enhancement of strategies that stop the growth of non-State actors.

My delegation underlines once again the importance of prevention in that important and overarching combat; the need to adopt initiatives to combat those groups and extremist ideologies that have set themselves the task of promoting violence and intolerance; to address the root causes that fuel this scourge; and to develop effective and innovative strategies to counter extremist and terrorist narratives and generate critical thinking in society.

For that reason, we welcome Egypt's support in addressing that issue through the holding of an open ministerial debate on countering the narratives and ideologies of terrorism (S/PV.7690) on 11 May. That meeting allowed us to address the threat of terrorism from a comprehensive and non-selective perspective, including responses to the scourge based on international cooperation and bearing in mind the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

In that regard, we welcome the adoption of the presidential statement S/PRST/2016/6, which calls on the Counter-Terrorism Committee to submit a comprehensive international framework to include a campaign to counter the narratives of terrorist groups, and also to provide guidelines and good practices to effectively counter, in compliance with international law, the ways that ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities use their narratives to encourage, motivate, and recruit others to commit terrorist acts. In that regard, we call on States Members to actively participate in the drafting of that report, particularly by presenting their national contributions, taking into account the fact that such a campaign should be adapted to the national context of each country.

With regard to regional cooperation, Venezuela considers it important to highlight the meetings held with the League of Arab States, the African Union and the European Union to address issues and challenges of common concern. It is therefore of vital importance to promote the role that regional and subregional organizations can play in finding peaceful and political solutions to conflicts, preventing such conflicts and designing coordinated strategies for maintaining and building peace, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations.

In that respect, and taking into account the fact that the agenda of the Security Council continues to be heavily concentrated on issues that threaten peace and security on the African continent, the strategic and complementary partnership between the United Nations and the African Union is even more relevant. The debate on cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union that was held on 24 May (S/PV.7694), highlighted once again the importance of cooperation between those two institutions in finding peaceful solutions to the conflicts affecting the African continent. We need to ensure that the African Union has the predictable and sustainable logistical and financial resources necessary to allow it to deal successfully with its designated tasks assigned in deploying the peacekeeping operations under its mandate. In that regard, we stress the contribution of the African Union Mission in Somalia to peacebuilding in that country. The Mission requires adequate financial resources in order to operate effectively in the context of its mandate.

Furthermore, in reiterating the premise that African problems require African solutions, Venezuela believes that a more active participation of the African Union in Security Council briefings would be appropriate to address issues related to that region, given its recognized legitimacy and political authority in Africa, particularly when considering the renewal, review or restructuring of the mandates of peacekeeping operations that are deployed on the continent.

We insist on the need for further progress in consolidating and enhancing the relationship between both multilateral forums on the basis of mutual respect and in terms of developing common and integrated strategies to tackle the emerging challenges in Africa, on the basis of the comparative advantages of the two organizations, with a view to ensuring improved coordination and synergy between them.

To conclude, we reiterate our thanks for the work undertaken by Egypt and wish every success to the dele of France for the coming month.

Ms. Sison (United States of America): I would like to take the opportunity of this wrap-up session to highlight several current pressing security concerns, including the situation in Syria, the issue of health care in armed conflict, and our ongoing efforts to increase cooperation between the Council and the African Union (AU) on security issues.

As we have for many months, the Council in May has focused on the political, humanitarian and security situations in Syria. As Special Envoy De Mistura has stressed, there are three interlinked elements needed for peace in Syria: stopping the fighting, improving humanitarian access and engaging in political negotiations to bring about a political transition. Yet as we discussed earlier this month, the cessation of hostilities has given way to violence, and the regime has disregarded international agreements on reducing the violence and providing humanitarian access, as outlined in resolutions 2254 (2015) and 2268 (2016), effectively undermining the conditions needed for political negotiations.

While all sides have contributed to the return to violence, the military escalation and indiscriminate attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, such as hospitals, schools and markets, are largely attributable to the actions of the Al-Assad regime, and, as attacks continue, the regime has restricted humanitarian access and blocked aid, including medical supplies to people in desperate need. It has deliberately targeted first responders, health-care workers and medical facilities. Resolution 2254 (2015) calls for rapid, safe and unhindered access throughout the country. Resolution 2139 (2014) specifically forbids the removal of medicines and medical supplies from aid convoys, but, as the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reports, that is routine throughout the country.

For our part, we will continue to urge all parties to comply fully across the country and specifically call for an end to the Al-Assad regime's continued offensive attacks in Aleppo, Latakia and elsewhere, as well as its besieging of towns and obstruction of humanitarian access. The United States has worked with Special Envoy De Mistura and, in particular, with the Russian Federation to reaffirm the cessation of hostilities across the country, and specifically that the parties agree to recommit to the truce in Aleppo and the Damascus suburbs. Yet the violence has continued, as we can see. Secretary Kerry has raised these concerns with Foreign Minister Lavrov and urged him to press the regime to cease at once air strikes against opposition forces and innocent civilians. Still, as we saw yesterday, there are reports that numerous civilians were killed as buildings around the national hospital in Idlib were struck. Again, at the last meeting in Vienna, all members of the International Syria Support Group urged full compliance of the parties with the terms of the cessation.

That leads me to several points that I would like to make with regard to our recent meeting on health care in armed conflict (S/PV.7685), which provided an opportunity to further examine the human consequences of attacks in Syria and elsewhere. The increasing trend of violence against medical personnel, facilities and transportation is clear in Syria. The attacks are so frequent that, as Under-Secretary-General Stephen O'Brien has told us, proximity to a hospital is now perceived by neighbours to be a threat to their own safety. As we noted in that meeting, over 725 doctors have been killed and over 350 attacks on medical facilities have taken place, the vast majority of which have been committed by the regime, although the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) has also directed multiple bombings of medical centres. We strongly condemn ISIL's current offensive in Aleppo, which threatens thousands of civilians and has also targeted medical facilities and staff.

Those issues are now covered in resolution 2286 (2016), in which the Council demands protection for medical and humanitarian personnel, hospitals and other medical facilities. The resolution also emphasizes the responsibilities of States to comply with international law, end impunity and ensure accountability for those responsible, and urges States to conduct investigations into such violations. We feel strongly about those principles, wherever such violence occurs, be it in Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan or elsewhere.

Turning to our meeting last week with the African Union (S/PV.7694), we welcome such opportunities to examine how best the two organizations can work together to achieve our common goals. Given the large percentage of United Nations troops deployed in Africa, coupled with the fact that over half of those serving in the continent are themselves African, we have much to gain from enhanced communication between the two bodies. We know that the AU can be a particularly effective partner in responding to the security crises in its own backyard, including those unfortunate cases in which offensive military operations are required. The Security Council and AU Peace and Security Council have common priorities and agree on many issues, but we also need to deal with the differences that can emerge inside each of our respective Councils. We need to be better at responding quickly and cohesively to the political drivers and roots of conflict.

Before I conclude, I would like to quickly mention our work and the Secretary-General selection process, as I know that many Member States are eager for news of the Council's plans. Under your leadership, Sir, we held an any-other-business session last week in which we began to discuss the next steps in fulfilling our important responsibilities to select the next head of the Organization. We look forward to further discussions under France's presidency in June to finalize the procedures for our upcoming deliberations.

In conclusion, I thank you, Sir, for your steady and professional leadership of the Council this month.

Mr. Bermúdez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, permit me, Sir, to congratulate you on having convened this wrap-up session in line with the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2010/507) and for having distributed a concept note with proposals addressed to the members of the Security Council to guide their statements. As I have said before, Uruguay values these formal wrap-up sessions because they offer the possibility of placing on the record the positions of the 15 members on the month's work, thereby contributing to giving the Security Council's action greater transparency and accountability.

Notwithstanding, Uruguay also attaches particular importance to interaction with the membership because we believe that it is always relevant to hold such wrap-up sessions in the Toledo format or any other informal format. Having said that, I also believe that the formal format is very appropriate this month, when the Security Council has the duty to share with all Members of the United Nations various topics of the greatest importance.

I will attempt to not be repetitive in saying what our Mission has already stated publicly in the Chamber. I therefore want to begin by highlighting the positive aspects of what we have this month.

First, for the second consecutive month, we have seen the lifting of a sanctions regime — the past month in the Côte d'Ivoire and this month in Liberia. That aspect of the Council's work must not be undermined, because the imposition of sanctions is one of the tools available to the Security Council, but its use must be limited to the time until the situation that called for its use has reverted to normal. In that regard, I was pleased to witness this process from the Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1572 (2004) concerning Côte d'Ivoire, which was dissolved on 28 April. I also take this opportunity to congratulate my colleague from Ukraine, who chaired the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1521 (2003) concerning Liberia, and who said in his statement in the meeting (S/PV.7695) at which we adopted resolution 2288 (2016), which dissolved the Committee, that it has now been inscribed in the annals of history.

Another positive aspect was the adoption of resolution 2286 (2016) on 3 May. That was a positive response to an extremely negative reality, which concerns us greatly, especially when we observe that there is a systematic pattern of attacks and destruction of medical facilities, their staff and means of transport; attacks on health-care workers and patients; and a systematic disruption of the supply of medications and the convoys that are sent to provide those medical supplies. Those violations of international humanitarian law are nothing but war crimes, and the Security Council should therefore address the issue in a resolution. I understand that not just the outcome — resolution 2286 (2016) — was a positive, but the process was also positive because it involved five non-permanent members as penholderswho worked to address a particularly relevant and urgent issue.

Allow me to briefly address a couple of issues that, from the point of view of working methods, could be improved. On 23 May, Security Council members met with African Union members informally in the morning and formally in the afternoon in order to address the programme of work agreed on between the parties. The issues to be addressed were African issues. In that regard, my delegation understands that the Security Council is acting appropriately by attaching priority to the issues that the African Union wants to include on the agenda. That should be the approach to working with a partner who wishes to transfer to the Security Council issues that are priorities for its organization and region. My delegation supported the request of the African Union to include the topic of Western Sahara on the agenda, but unfortunately that was not possible owing to the obstruction by some members of the Security Council who refuse to consider the issue.

With regard to the selection process of the Secretary-General, my delegation recognizes the leadership Egypt has provided during its presidency on this matter, in particular by holding the coordinators' meeting on 18 May and on other issues that were considered by members of the Security Council on 25 May. While there are some differences among members of the Security Council about different aspects of the process, I understand that it is very important to begin as quickly as possible holding Security Council meetings with candidates who are interested in the position to see if the consensus achieved during our consultations last week holds up.

Finally, I want to underscore Uruguay's concern about the two terrorist attacks perpetrated in May against the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), which led to the death of Blue Helmets. MINUSMA is the peacekeeping operation that has had the most casualties from direct attacks. We have repeatedly called it the most dangerous of all the deployed missions. Unfortunately, the Security Council is accustomed to expressing itself about terrorist attacks through press communiqués, but in this case it was a terrorist attack against a United Nations peacekeeping mission.

During its mission to Mali in March, the Security Council was able to see the precarious conditions under which this peacekeeping Mission carries out its work. For the reasons already mentioned and for having been the direct target of terrorist attacks in May, I propose that we not run out the deadlines that we proposed for June, but rather that we speed up the timetable to adopt a new resolution on MINUSMA's mandate, in particular everything that enables it to increase its defence capability in order to prevent more loss of lives among our peacekeepers.

Mr. González de Linares Palou (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to congratulate Ambassador Aboulatta and his entire team for their remarkable and effective work in managing the issues of the Security Council during this month, which has had a very heavy workload. I also thank him for issuing the concept note, which allows us to focus on the issues of this wrap-up meeting.

These formal wrap-up sessions are very useful. We support them and believe that it is a good idea to hold them as part of our ongoing support for transparency in this Council. We also support the holding of informal and interactive meetings of the Security Council with non-member States because that also allows us to enrich ourselves with their comments on our own work.

I will concentrate on one of the areas of the Council's work in the month of May that the presidency has specifically highlighted, that of resolution 2286 (2016) on medical assistance in armed conflicts. I will also make a brief reference to the briefing on the challenges to security in the Sahel (see S/PV.7699), which my delegation organized together with the Egyptian presidency just a few days ago.

With regard to 2286 (2016) resolution, which was adopted by consensus and sponsored by 86 States Members of the Organization, indeed deserves to be highlighted. It is the first Security Council resolution to deal exclusively with medical assistance in armed conflicts, and its adoption shows that the Security Council is responding to a very painful reality. In the year and a half since Spain joined the Council, there has not been a single month during which there has not been one attack against doctors or hospitals and a country in conflict. Resolution 2286 (2016) not only condemns attacks against doctors and hospitals in armed conflict and calls for compliance with international law in the area, it also urges States to investigate such violations of international humanitarian law and to bring the guilty to justice. It also deals with issues such as preventing attacks, the importance of training and the need to gather objective and reliable information on the attacks against doctors and hospitals in countries in conflict. The resolution also calls upon the Secretary-General to request and make recommendations to prevent these events and to inform the Security Council at least once a year on the implementation of this resolution. The adoption of the resolution sends a message of support from the Security Council to doctors and health-care workers who work in situations of armed conflict and day after day are fulfilling their missions under extremely difficult conditions.

With regard to the new methods of work of the Security Council, this resolution has established a new precedent in the way that initiatives are proposed and texts are negotiated. For the first time, the initiative of the leadership and the coordination of the process was assumed by five members. They are all elected members belonging to the five regional groups. Therefore, it was not only an innovative process, but also a model process in terms of consensus, transparency and the inclusive nature of it. It was an example of the success of the Security Council's initiatives and efforts when it works in a constructive way and as a team.

Climate change is not an abstract problem or one for the future; it is scourge that is determining the living conditions of millions of people throughout the world today. It is pushing specific countries and people, for example, Somalia, into a situation of environmental, economic and social stress, and it has a direct impact on international peace and security. It is a horizontal and structural challenge that we must confront with all of our resources.

In light of the aforementioned, I turn to the briefing on the security challenges in the Sahel that took place last Thursday (S/PV.7699). That meeting was a clear example of the way in which the Council should address threats to peace and security concerning situations on its agenda through an integrated, holistic approach, including, for example, in cases such as the Sahel, desertification as a key element in understanding the reality of the situation in the Sahel. The Security Council must therefore be appropriately informed of all challenges to peace and security in all corners of the world. That is the only way in which, together, we can improve our most fundamental function — prevention.

I conclude by reiterating, Mr. President, my appreciation for your focused and effective presidency of the Council and to wish every success to the French presidency in the upcoming month.

Mr. Okamura (Japan): I would like to begin by congratulating you, Mr. President, on a very successful presidency during the month of May.

First, let me touch upon the Security Council mission to the Horn of Africa. At such an important juncture in Somalia's Statebuilding, the mission was both timely and beneficial. I thank the Egyptian presidency for taking the initiative to organize that visit. With regard to the political process, the most pressing issue is the electoral process. During the meeting in Mogadishu, President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud promised to hold elections in August in order to build a united Somalia. In keeping with his word, he issued a presidential decree regarding the elections on 22 May. It was a very encouraging development and demonstrated the difference the Council can make on the ground when it visits the countries on its agenda.

The Council should continue to do all that it can in supporting the Somali-led transition process. In Somalia, after more than 20 years of the absence of a central Government, it may be difficult for the people to really recognize the legitimacy of the Government.

Choosing their leaders through elections does not necessarily mean accepting the State's authority. The Government should provide security and administrative and social services to the people as peace dividends in order to gain their trust. In following the formula of Abraham Lincoln, the Somalis have built a Government of the people and by the people, but it remains a big challenge to turn it into a Government for the people.

Above all, we need to urgently establish a strong security sector. If State authority is not extended sufficiently to the areas liberated from Al-Shabaab, power vacuums will be created and terrorists will take advantage of them. Strong administrative institutions also need to be firmly in place. The Federal Government in Mogadishu will then have authority with substance. Only a Government with strong institutions will allow the Council to consider a possible exit strategy for the African Union Mission in Somalia in the long run.

Japan will highlight the importance of institution-building in the open debate on peacebuilding in Africa during its Council presidency in July.

On 3 May, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2286 (2016) on health care in armed conflict, with 85 sponsors. It was our great honour to co-author the resolution, together with Spain, New Zealand, Egypt and Uruguay. A few days after the adoption, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) sent an open letter to all United Nations Member States. In the letter, the ICRC welcomed the adoption of the resolution and urged Member States to reaffirm the importance of compliance with international humanitarian law and to take action in accordance with resolution 2286 (2016). We are glad to hear of the positive reaction on the part of the ICRC. The situations on the ground in Syria and other countries, including Yemen, Afghanistan, Libya and Mali, are still grim. We must remain vigilant and urge all parties to conflict to abide by the resolution.

In closing, I would like to commend you, Mr. President, and the entire Egyptian team for your splendid, very well organized and skilful work.

(*spoke in French*)

I take this opportunity to wish every success to Ambassador François Delattre during his presidency next month. He can rely on my team and particularly on me in ensuring the best outcome of the Council's work.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): Let me begin, Mr. President, with warm congratulations and thanks to you and to your whole team for a very successful presidency. Once again, it has been a busy month. I am therefore glad that you have made time for this wrap-up session so that we may capture the lessons learned from the past few weeks and share them transparently in this open meeting. I very much agree with our colleagues from Uruguay and Spain who said that it would be even more effective if the session were to be interactive and informal.

In keeping with the useful concept note that the President circulated, I will focus on three points today: the Council's visit to Somalia; the situation in Syria; and our work on appointing the next Secretary-General. I believe that all three are examples of the need for us to take an action-oriented approach so that we can exert pressure and make a real difference in the world and foster progress in a way that goes beyond our usual business of adopting resolutions and products. Let me take each briefly in turn.

Our visit to Somalia formed part of a good month for cooperation with regional bodies, joining the visits from both the African Union Peace and Security Council and the European Union Peace and Security Committee to New York. Those are important load-bearing relationships that we must continue to invest in and to strengthen for the future. But the visit to Somalia also demonstrated something else. It reaffirmed that Security Council trips to countries on our agenda can have a positive, tangible influence. It reaffirmed that we speak with a powerful voice when we are united and when we urge progress in the name of peace and security. As our Japanese colleague just said, we saw that when the Somali President approved the electoral model to be used in this year's crucial elections shortly after our departure. In doing so, he overcame an important hurdle to the democratic, representative future that he people of Somalia so urgently deserve. I therefore encourage future presidencies to mirror the example set by the Egyptian presidency and arrange more visits to countries on our agenda.

If Somalia shows how we have got it right this month, sadly, Syria typifies the opposite. Following the powerful debate on health care workers in armed conflict (S/PV.7685), it was right that the Council met to discuss the deteriorating situation in Aleppo. In doing so, we helped contribute to the public pressure that eventually brought about a recommitment to the cessation of hostilities. But even that simple act was far too difficult to achieve. Even as Aleppo burned, the Council took too long to agree to hold a simple meeting.

Actions outside the Chamber — such as removing medicine from convoys, stopping urgent medical evacuations from besieged areas, or denying basic aid to those most in need — speak louder than the words within it. Those are the actions of the Syrian regime, and they are deafening in comparison to the words of the Security Council. So our response must not be limited to calling another meeting. It cannot be even more words. That is why we fully support the call from the International Syria Support Group for air drops to besieged areas, should access not be granted by land by tomorrow. That deadline is looming fast. Should the regime continue to prevent aid from reaching those who need it, we will all have to work to turn the Support Group's pledge into action.

My final point is about our work on the appointment of the next Secretary-General. I would like to pay tribute to you, Mr. President, for beginning informal discussions on how the Council will conduct that vital selection process. The General Assembly hearings have set a high bar for us to follow. There are huge expectations, both inside and outside this building. I therefore look forward to a Council process that builds on the Assembly's excellent work on the hearings last month and next month, too, no doubt. In doing so, I believe we will build on the steps taken this month towards fostering a more open and responsive Security Council. This has not been about votes, negotiations or discussions, but about showing that we are in the business of getting things done. I look forward to our efforts continuing, both under the French presidency and others to come.

Mr. Yelchenko (Ukraine): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, and the entire Egyptian delegation for providing an environment conducive to effective and efficient work by the Council in the month of May. Your team's highly professional efforts have been a hallmark of the Egyptian presidency and deserve high praise.

At the outset, the Ukrainian delegation would like to welcome the return of the formal wrap-up meeting at the end of the month. In our opinion, it is an important instrument in the Council's toolkit for ensuring transparency in its work, something that is appreciated both by the United Nations membership and civil society. May was not an easy month, full of difficult discussions, important negotiations and events requiring the Council's urgent attention. It was a month of some historic decisions, one of them being the lifting of sanctions on Liberia and the termination of the related Security Council Committee, a case where I felt very pleased to be losing my job as its Chair. It was a month when from the very first day Council members demonstrated the ability to reach agreements and find solutions to issues on which very different and sometimes opposing views exist. That is not to say that we found a magic formula for resolving differences, but to point out that if and when the political will is present, the Council is very likely to deliver a result.

Exactly four weeks ago, the Council adopted resolution 2286 (2016), on the protection of medical and humanitarian personnel in armed conflicts. The fact that 85 States Members of the United Nations sponsored the resolution emphasized very vividly that the subject requires urgent attention on the part of the international community. That is nowhere more apparent than in Syria, where medical facilities and health-care workers have been repeatedly and systematically targeted. Over the past month, the Syrian issue has consistently been on the Council's agenda. In our view, that consistency is a sure sign that things in that country are not moving in the right direction. The international community is anxious to hear and welcome news that humanitarian assistance has been delivered to one or another Syrian town or village, and it appears that for the moment that is the best we can hope for. What a sorry state of affairs — especially when we are reminded that we are talking about a conflict that according to various counts may have already taken the lives of as many 500,000 people.

At February's wrap-up session (S/PV.7633), my delegation spoke of a glimmer of hope that seemed to have appeared for the Syrian people. Three months later, we can say that the glimmer has been all but extinguished; last night's bombings of Idlib are gruesome proof of that. This is not the occasion to point fingers about it, but what I would like to single out is the issue of accountability. Accountability is the point of reference in resolution 2286 (2016), and it would be a challenge to find anyone generally opposed to bringing those responsible for violations of international humanitarian law to account. While we are fully aware of the political sensitivities surrounding the whole Syrian political negotiation process, we are nonetheless convinced that if for the time being accountability is not about to be achieved through proper legal processes, transparency is the very least we can provide. In that regard, a very controversial picture emerged last Friday from the briefing on the humanitarian situation in Syria (S/PV.7701). The Council would do well to modify its approach to its consideration of the ongoing conflict in Syria.

I would be remiss if I failed to commend the Egyptian presidency for spearheading open debates on the topics of countering the narratives and ideologies of terrorism (S/PV.7690) and cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union (see S/PV.7694), and for leading the Council's visit to Somalia. All in all, Ukraine welcomes the strong regional, Chapter VIII-focused edge of the Egyptian presidency. Besides the meeting with the African Union Peace and Security Council, that also relates to the first ever joint consultative meeting with the League of Arab States.

As a country with European integration at the heart of its foreign and internal policy, Ukraine also greatly appreciated the useful informal exchange between the Council and the Political and Security Committee of the European Union (EU). In that regard, we also look forward to next month's EU briefing. Since all of those important topics have already been eloquently addressed by other speakers, I will not dwell on them, or on my visit last week to the Central African Republic as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013) concerning the Central African Republic, about which I am planning to report to the Council later.

In keeping with your suggestion to focus statements on key subjects, Mr. President, I would like touch on the issue of the appointment of the next Secretary-General. There have been several discussions on the issue this month among Council members at various levels. We believe that those deliberations have been very useful but perhaps somewhat slow when it comes to deciding on the Council's next steps. Given the importance of the matter, the large number of candidates and the ever-present time pressure, the Ukrainian delegation would like to underline that we are strongly in favour of holding the Council's meetings with candidates in a timely fashion — provided that the candidates express an interest in that — and of organizing initial straw-poll rounds without any delays. We are of the opinion that for the Council to postpone taking action can only result in its unnecessary imposition on itself of time constraints that it would be better to avoid.

In closing, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, and your team on the successful completion of your presidency, and to assure the incoming French presidency of our full support.

Mr. Shen Bo (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China would like to express its appreciation to the Egyptian presidency for guiding the Council smoothly and effectively through the month of May. We congratulate you, Ambassador Aboulatta, and your team. And we wish the incoming French presidency all the best for the month of June.

African issues have been a focus of this month's work. A Security Council mission visited Somalia, Kenya and Egypt, in a reflection of the Council's strong commitment to finding a political solution to the question of Somalia and promoting peace and stability on the African continent. China appreciates the holding, on Egypt's initiative, of an open debate (see S/PV.7694) on the question of cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union in the area of peace and security, and the adoption of an accompanying presidential statement (S/PRST/2016/8). The meeting evaluated the successful experiences of the past decade of cooperation between the two parties, consolidated international consensus on the issue and further enhanced support to the cause of peace and security in Africa. China welcomes the road map for the African Peace and Security Architecture from 2016 to 2020, and hopes that the United Nations and the African Union will strengthen their cooperation in the area of peace and security.

We support the African approach of African solutions to African problems, as well as the African Union's efforts to resolve differences through peaceful means such as dialogue, negotiation, good offices and mediation.

The international community should provide greater support for capacity-building of the African Union and its collective security mechanism and help Africa to achieve durable peace, prosperity and development as early as possible.

Terrorism is a common security threat faced by humankind. Counter-terrorism has consistently been a focus of the Council's work. China welcomes the fact that this month, at the initiative of Egypt, the Council held an open debate on counter-terrorism (see S/PV.7690) that highlighted the importance of the international community's coordination and cooperation in fighting terrorism, creating international synergies. The international community should form a united front on counter-terrorism, and full play must be given to the central coordinating role of the United Nations and the Security Council. In the fight against terrorism, we should abide by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and adhere to standard criteria. This fight must not be linked to a specific ethnicity or religion.

The focus should be on halting the trans-border movement of terrorists and cutting off their financial resources and their supplies of weapons. Attention must also be given to effectively fighting terrorist activities conducted via the Internet and social media.

On the question of the Middle East, at present the conflict between Palestine and Israel continues, as the peace negotiations remain deadlocked. China is deeply concerned about the situation. As a fundamental issue having direct bearing on peace in the Middle East, the question of Palestine must not be overlooked and certainly not forgotten. To preserve the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people is the joint responsibility of the international community. More robust efforts are required to push forward the peace process, on the political front, and to promote reconstruction, on the economic front. The key to breaking the current impasse is to jumpstart the peace process.

China welcomes the international community's efforts in terms of good offices and welcomes the new approaches proposed in that regard. The international support group will hold a meeting of foreign ministers on 3 June in Paris. China hopes that this will inject fresh vitality into our efforts to find a solution. China's Foreign Minister, Wang Yi, will head the Chinese delegation to the meeting and work with the rest of the international community to facilitate the peace process in the Middle East and help find a solution to the question of Palestine and Israel at an early date.

Mr. Taula (New Zealand): We congratulate you, Mr. President, and your Mission for your efficient and professional leadership of the Council in May. We thank you also for the concept note that you provided for this session.

We were very pleased to participate in the mission to Kenya, Somalia and Egypt. In Somalia in particular, as other speakers have noted, we saw immediate, positive impact from the Council's face-to-face engagement with the President, regional leaders and other stakeholders in this critical period as arrangements for the elections were being finalized. We welcome the decree issued three days after the visit by the President setting out the electoral process, and we urge all Somalis to work within those parameters in re-establishing a representative Government in Somalia.

We see Council missions such as these as a very valuable tool to advance peace and security objectives. They can also assist the Council in meeting its conflict-prevention responsibilities.

That is why New Zealand has been a strong supporter of such visits during our term, including to Guinea-Bissau, where Council engagement alongside regional and international stakeholders remains critical, and to Burundi, which we would have liked to have seen the Council visit earlier, when, we feel, quiet diplomacy could have had more of a chance of shaping developments.

Visiting missions take time and money, including from United Nations mission budgets, so we should use them judiciously. We should be flexible about timing and configuration. In some cases, we do not see the need for all 15 Council members to travel, necessarily, in order to convey the views of this body, especially in conflict-prevention situations. We think that the Council's visit to Timor-Leste in 2012 was a good example of a mini-mission. It was led by South Africa; six members, all elected, took part in that visit.

We face major conflict-prevention challenges in the year ahead, including in the Great Lakes, and we should be flexible about how we use the Council's tools to address those issues.

We were very pleased that the Council hosted the African Union for the annual joint consultative meeting last week. The meetings were symbolic, coming at the 10-year anniversary, and continuing to deepen the exchanges between the two Councils is an even more critical issue for us. We thought that the discussion in Addis earlier this year on the way back from Bujumbura was a very helpful informal exchange that enhanced the Councils' mutual understanding. It was highly topical, and delegations were ready to engage on the core issues.

As discussed last week, we think that more regular discussions, including teleconferences between the presidencies of the two Councils, would be one useful and low-cost way to maintain those linkages and, more importantly, to support a shared analysis of conflicts and how we can both best address them. There are other ways in which we can work better together, including through joint visits, and we would be happy to discuss those ideas further.

The month began on a very encouraging note, with the adoption of resolution 2286 (2016), as others have noted. The resolution condemned attacks on health-care workers and health-care facilities. It recalled key international humanitarian law and the principles of distinction and precaution, and the prohibition against indiscriminate attacks. And, importantly, it requested the Secretary-General to brief the Council annually on the implementation of the resolution.

We would like to reflect briefly on some of the working methods behind the adoption of the resolution, to which Spain referred to as well. New Zealand was very pleased to play a significant role, working together with our partners in the Council, in developing the resolution, which was supported by all 15 members and sponsored by 85 Member States.

Key stakeholders, including the International Committee of the Red Cross and Médecins Sans Frontières, were closely engaged, as were stakeholders not on the Council. We see the development of this resolution, over many months, as a strong model for inclusive and considered discussion and decision-making. New Zealand would like to see this approach taken more often by the Council to improve its outcomes.

Finally, in the area of working methods, I would like to comment on the discussions under way on the appointment process for the chairs of subsidiary organs. These issues are of great interest to us, because they are important for the way the Council works and have implications for the wider United Nations membership and for all States that will serve as elected members on the Council. It is elected members that serve as chairs of the Council's subsidiary organs, including the sanctions committees. The appointment process of these chairing roles is notoriously opaque, and we believe that this should change.

The Security Council elections will be held next month, and the earlier timing provides us with more time to reflect on which members are best suited to chair which subsidiary bodies. And, most importantly, this allows more time to consult with the new members.

Accordingly, New Zealand is a strong advocate of all Council members being involved in this process, not just the permanent members, and we propose that successive Presidents of the Security Council are best placed to facilitate the chair allocation process after the incoming members have been elected.

Overall, New Zealand wants to see more inclusive decision-making, less micromanagement and less control in the hands of few, and better efforts to prepare new chairs for their roles. Given the importance of these issues, and working methods discussions more generally, we would see value in holding regular briefings for interested Member States on the work of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, as I think was mentioned in the presidential statement adopted after the open debate late last year.

In closing, let me say that we all benefit from greater transparency and greater engagement with the United Nations membership as a whole.

Mrs. Adnin (Malaysia): I wish to begin by commending you and your team, Mr. President, for the excellent organization and conduct of the Council's work this month. Based on that alone, I must say that the Egyptian presidency has been a resounding success. I wish also to thank you for having organized this formal note 507 briefing. This particular format affords the Council an important opportunity for its members, particularly the elected members, to place on record their views on and assessment of the work and workings of the Council, which other formats do not. We continue to believe that Council members should reach an understanding on striking a balance between interactivity, which the informal briefing, or Toledo format, allows, and the need for a formal record, which the present format affords. In line with the concept paper, I intend to focus on a few of the five issues suggested.

I wish first to reflect on the Council's recent work on Syria, specifically on the humanitarian front. We wish to underscore that the Syrian Government has a full obligation to secure the safety, security and welfare of its citizens. The Government must also provide and facilitate humanitarian access to besieged and hard-to-reach areas, particularly to the areas under its control. As such, we, alongside other Council members, remain appalled that, despite our collective best efforts, humanitarian access, especially to besieged and hard-to-reach areas, remains pitifully limited. Bureaucratic delays, facilitation failures or the wilful obstruction of eight convoys by the Syrian Government and other parties of the conflict are all deplorable and completely unacceptable. It is frustrating, as every passing day can mean life or death to the people in besieged areas. They cannot be forsaken. While the 17 May communiqué of the International Syria Support Group (ISSG) provides for the activation of air bridges and drops by tomorrow should the situation with regard to access does not improve, we must underscore that it should not substitute for land access. In that regard, we call on all ISSG members, particularly those with influence on the Syrian parties, to continue pushing for land access.

It is fitting that the tenth anniversary of informal consultations between the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council (PSC) was commemorated with an open debate (see S/PV.7694) on 24 May that focused on the way forward for United Nations-African Union (AU) relations and the future of the African Peace and Security Architecture. The recent reviews of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, peace operations and resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, have provided impetus for a renewed and reinvigorated relationship between the Security Council and the PSC. Malaysia reaffirms its support for S/PRST/2016/8, which we believe frames and paves the way for future engagement between the Security Council and the AU PSC.

In line with our common interests to have more substantive discussions that could lead to more concrete outcomes, Malaysia believes that both the Council and the AU PSC can further improve their working methods when convening informal consultations. Specifically, we believe that certain proposals floated during the May consultations, including on the agenda of the joint consultations, with emphasis on an assessment of the implementation of the Security Council-AU PSC communiqué would be useful for continuity and coordination purposes. In addition, following the example of the way in which informal consultations between the Council and the European Union Commission are undertaken, we are of the view that the practice by which each side proposes a certain number of topics it wishes to discuss would avoid unproductive procedural wrangling and afford more time for substantive exchanges.

Turning to more working methods-related issues, my delegation wishes to reiterate its appreciation to Ambassador Motohide Yoshikawa, who will be leaving very soon, and to the delegation of Japan for their sterling work in leading the Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. We fully support the Informal Working Group's proposed work plan for 2016 and are pleased with the progress of consultations on the first item of the work plan — on transitional arrangements for newly elected or incoming Council members. Given that, in a few weeks' time, the General Assembly is scheduled to elect five non-permanent members of the Council for the term 2017-2018, the proposal to involve the new members in the Council's work as early as possible is welcome. At the same time, we believe that the process of identifying new Chairs of subsidiary bodies should also begin early. In that regard, we support the proposal for incoming members to be fully consulted and for the Security Council presidency to take a much larger role in that process. Ideally, the presidency should lead in a way that could introduce greater transparency and inclusiveness in the Council's work.

In conclusion, I again congratulate you, Mr. President, and your excellent team on a job well done. The Egyptian presidency was conducted very efficiently and professionally, which we greatly appreciate. To Ambassador Delattre and the delegation of France, I wish to reaffirm the full cooperation and support of my delegation during his presidency and to wish them all the very best. We are confident that France will successfully guide the Council through what looks to be a very hectic June.

Mr. Seck (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, on behalf of the entire delegation of Senegal, I would like to warmly congratulate you, Mr. President, and your team for the professionalism and efficiency with which you steered the work of the Security Council in the month of May.

The Egyptian presidency was certainly busy and productive, and at times highly paced, both in terms of the strategic discussions and the practical actions taken by the Security Council. There were times for reflection, with thematic debates on how to deconstruct terrorist ideology and rhetoric (see S/PV.7690), on cooperation in the areas of peace and security with the African Union (see S/PV.7694) and on the security challenges in the Sahel region (see S/PV.7699). There was also moments of action in the Council. At the initiative of Egypt, the Council travelled to East Africa — to Nairobi, Mogadishu and Cairo. It also reviewed several mandates and adopted five resolutions, four or which concerned African issues.

I would also like to thank you, Mr. President, for your concept note on issues to orient our exchange today, namely, on Syria, Somalia, the counter-terrorism fight, cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union and protecting medical staff in armed conflict. The elements to the press that you issued on Friday, on the situation in Guinea-Bissau, and our adoption this morning of resolution 2290 (2016) attest to the crucial importance that your presidency has attached to African issues.

The tenth annual session of consultations between the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council stood out among this organ's highpoints in the month of May. They were the first such consultations held since the issuance of the report (see S/2015/446) of the High-level Independent Panel on Peacekeeping Operations, the Secretary-General's own report (S/2015/682) on the implementation of the Panel's recommendations and the report on peacebuilding (see S/2015/490). This year's session made it possible to renew the commitment of the two organizations to pursue their engagement — a development that gives rise to much hope.

In addition, in considering the situations in Somalia and Burundi, the Council and the PSC held discussions about the need to adapt strategies and methods to the changing situation. Its informal consultations and dialogue made it possible to reflect on redefining priorities and preventing conflicts through cooperation between the two bodies. A key outcome of those consultations was the importance of orienting their cooperation — and thus their annual consultations — towards a more pragmatic approach based on the actions to be undertaken by them in relation to specific challenges.

It is important to identify priorities, with concrete deadlines and achievable objectives, that both organizations can meet, including with regard to strategic cooperation. As appropriate, that should make it possible for us to align regional cooperation and the triangular dialogue among the Security Council, the Secretariat and the troop-contributing countries so as to provide more coherence and effectiveness to the Council's work. Given the high number and complexity of the issues on the the agendas of both organizations, the question arises as to whether we should review the consultations format, either to hold it over two days or to convene two sessions per year.

Another issue that we should consider is that of medical personnel in situations of armed conflict, concerning which the Security Council adopted resolution 2286 (2016). I recall, inter alia, General Assembly resolution 69/132, concerning global health and foreign policy, which my country had the honour to submit to the Assembly in December 2015. The resolution urges all parties to conflict to take the measures necessary to prevent and suppress attacks on medical personnel and health infrastructure. It also requests States to be ensure accountability for the perpetrators of such acts, because no one should shoot at an ambulance.

At the same time, my delegation understands the problem of providing medical care in armed conflict beyond ensuring the protection and delivery of medical humanitarian assistance. Regarding the harmful impact of the recent Ebola epidemic on peacebuilding processes in the affected countries, it is urgent that we be able to keep the peace in the wake of emerging challenges undermining the Council's actions in seeking lasting peace. We dare hope that the report of the Secretary-General that has been requested in the resolution will offer an opportunity to launch an in-depth reflection on the issue of health care in armed conflict.

We commend the role of the Security Council in the process of electing the new Secretary-General, which the Egyptian delegation has sought to clarify. We are certain that the presidencies to come will effectively and efficiently organize straw polls and interactive dialogues with all candidates who desire to so engage.

To conclude, I reiterate the congratulations of the Senegalese delegation to you, Sir, on your leadership this month, and assure Ambassador François Delattre of France and his team of our support. We wish them every success as they prepare to assume the presidency of the Security Council for June, which will be extremely busy.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Egypt.

At the outset, I should like to thank everyone for the kind words addressed to the Egyptian presidency during the month of May, and I express our deep gratitude to all members of the Security Council for the support provided to Egypt throughout this month.

May was a busy month, during which the Council addressed extremely important issues that have a direct impact on international peace and security. The main purpose of this wrap-up session is to draw lessons from dealing with issues that have an impact on international peace and security. We must build on the lessons learned from our working methods during this month and evaluate the effectiveness of the Council's activities in terms of transparency, scope and objectivity. In that regard, the Egyptian presidency distributed an informal concept paper in which we proposed focusing on a limited number of issues during this meeting and addressing them in both their procedural and substantive aspects. The aim of this exercise was to affirm the important relation between those two aspects in increasing the effectiveness of the Council's work. Accordingly, I will now focus on the following topics.

First, the unanimous adoption of resolution 2286 (2015), with its focus on health care in armed conflict, is an indicator of the important and constructive role that the elected members of the Council can play. That initiative, which was launched by five elected members of the Council — Japan, Spain, New Zealand, Uruguay and Egypt — addressed the increased attacks against health-care facilities and health-care workers in conflict. The broad support for the resolution, with the sponsorship of 85 Member States, reflects the ability of the Council to reach new heights in facing emerging challenges that threaten international peace and security. It also indicates the Council's ability to mobilize support for relevant resolutions that enjoy legitimacy and acceptance in the international community. Accordingly, that improves the credibility of the Council and points to its seriousness in addressing and dealing with the perpetrators of such attacks.

I would also like to draw attention to the unique way in which we shaped that initiative. It was the first time that five members of the Council collectively developed a draft resolution in a measured way, with openness, transparency and inclusivity in dealing with all members of the Council, all interested parties and actors that are not Council members, all with the aim of enriching the content and in reaching unanimity. That is different from the usual practice, whereby a single member presents a draft resolution without enough time to hold consultations on it.

Secondly, the open ministerial debate (see S/PV.7690) on the theme of countering the narratives and ideologies of terrorism reiterated the importance of expanding our approach to combating terrorism. It is no longer enough or effective for international efforts to focus on security aspects alone, for this is a phenomenon that has gained ground in all societies, regardless of their level of development. The participation of representatives from the Al Azhar Islamic Research Academy and the Microsoft Corporation reflected the importance of the Council's openness to the perspectives of the real actors and players in the area of countering the narratives of terrorists. In addition, the participation of more than 70 speakers in the open debate reflected the extreme importance and concern that the international community attaches to the topic.

The summary in presidential statement S/PRST/2016/6, which was the outcome of the open debate, requests the Counter-Terrorism Committee to submit a proposal to the Security Council by 30 April 2017 for a comprehensive international framework to counter the narratives by extremists. That fact constitutes an affirmation of the Council's seriousness and of its political will to build on the broad interest in the topic in a practical manner. That is a challenge to Member States to work in a unified manner and to show their commitment in fulfilling that task. In that regard, we call upon the Counter-Terrorism Committee, which Egypt is honoured to chair, to begin immediately implementing the task mandated to it and to consult closely with States, organizations and the relevant parties to allow the Security Council to consider the framework in all its aspects after the Committee has finalized it. That will enhance the credibility of the Security Council and its resolutions and illustrate the international consensus on the issue.

Thirdly, many briefings and consultations were held this month on the situation in Syri. The most important one was the briefing held on 4 May (see S/PV.7687), which was unique because it did not include the adoption of a draft resolution on the situation in Syria, as had been previously agreed. Interventions by Member States, which included the participation of the Syrian delegation, revealed points of both convergence and divergence with regard to violations of the ceasefire by Syrian and regional parties. While that does not represent the ideal manner for the Council to act, it nevertheless serves to highlight the clarity and realism with which the crisis and its magnitude are described. Despite that — or perhaps as a result of it — the Council was able to issue two press statements in which it reaffirmed its rejection and condemnation of the targeting civilians and civilian structures and its call for a cessation of all hostilities against humanitarian and medical personnel. We also reaffirmed our condemnation of terrorism.

The main principles that bring us together — in line with international law, international humanitarian law and our resolutions, without selectivity — are sufficient to enable us to agree upon the main principles for resolving the situation in Syria and ending the suffering of the Syrian people. In that regard, I would like once again to reiterate Egypt's support for the International Syria Support Group and to encourage the Group to lead the crucial, necessary coordination between the United States and the Russian Federation under their joint leadership.

Fourthly, the time chosen for the Council's visit to Somalia, Kenya and Egypt in May reflected the importance of timing of the Council's field visits. The visit coincided with the tension related to the stalemate in the Somali Parliament in adopting the electoral model for 2016, thereby allowing the Council to send a powerful message to all Somali parties about the importance of building on the achievements made since 2012 and the fact that the Council will not tolerate anything that hinders the political process. Days following our visit to Mogadishu, the Somali President exercised his executive powers to adopt the electoral model, paving the way for taking the necessary measures to complete the election process in time. In that context, and coinciding with the political and security developments in Somalia and the humanitarian crisis in the Horn of Africa, the Council's visit and its meeting with the President of Kenya, Uhuru Kenyatta, provided a good opportunity to hear the perspectives of an important actor in the Horn of Africa and to listen to his views on the challenges facing regional efforts to securing peace and security in Somalia and the possible means for strengthening cooperation between the Security Council and the important regional players in confronting the crises in those areas.

Based on the Council's interest in soliciting the views of regional actors, the Council concluded its visit with a meeting with the Permanent Representatives to the League of Arab States in Cairo. That was the first such meeting with the Arab League, in which we held a frank dialogue about the challenges in the region, including terrorism. We also discussed the means to support the process in Somalia and the peace process in the Middle East, which encompassed the Arab League's perspective on the French initiative and the existing consensus on a number of principles that allow for the return to direct negotiations between the Israeli and Palestinian sides.

Fifthly, the joint meetings between the members of the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union were an opportunity for a strategic review of the state of our partnership on the tenth anniversary of the first such consultations. The in-depth discussions during the meetings reflected the common desire to develop joint cooperation towards a deeper and more effective partnership, the advantages of informal meetings between the two sides and the possibility of holding them regularly, when the situation allows, to permit regular dialogue between the two sides and form a common understanding of the challenges in the continent. The meetings also raised important issues about how to best use the annual consultations as a way to coordinate efforts and positions between the two sides and draw lessons to be applied within the broader sphere of promoting the role of regional organizations.

Finally, as this is the last meeting under the Egyptian presidency in the month of May, I would like to express my appreciation for the outstanding efforts on the part of my colleagues in the Egyptian delegation to making our presidency a success. I would also like to express my thanks to all delegations for the support provided to the Egyptian delegation during its presidency. I cannot forget to thank in particular the Council's secretariat and the entire team of interpreters for their excellent, professional work, which was a direct reason for our smooth operations during the month of May. I wish every success to His Excellency Ambassador François Delattre and his delegation during France's presidency in June. We assure them of our support in successfully carrying out their tasks.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.7704

Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7704th meeting

Thursday, 2 June 2016, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Delattre	(France)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	Japan	Mr. Minami
	Malaysia	Mr. Ibrahim
	New Zealand	Mr. Taula
	Russian Federation	Mr. Zagaynov
	Senegal	Mr. Ciss
	Spain	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Suárez Moreno

Agenda

Women and peace and security

Responding to human trafficking in situations of conflict-related sexual violence

Report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2016/361)

Letter dated 27 May 2016 from the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2016/496)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Expression of thanks to the outgoing President

The President (*spoke in French*): As this is the first formal meeting of the Council for the month of June, I should like to take this opportunity to pay tribute, on behalf of the Council, to His Excellency Ambassador Amr Abdellatif Aboulatta, Permanent Representative of Egypt, for his service as President of the Council for the month of May. I am sure I speak for all members of the Council in expressing deep appreciation to Ambassador Aboulatta and his delegation for the great diplomatic skill with which they conducted the Council's business last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Women and peace and security

Responding to human trafficking in situations of conflict-related sexual violence

Report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2016/361)

Letter dated 27 May 2016 from the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2016/496)

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Estonia, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Morocco, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Portugal, South Africa, Sri Lanka, the Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, the Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Ms. Zainab Hawa Bangura, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict; Ms. Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially in women and children; and Ms. Lisa Davis, of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Mr. Ioannis Vrailas, Deputy Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2016/361, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence.

I wish to also draw the attention of Council members to document S/2016/496, which contains a letter dated 27 May 2016 from the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept note on the item under consideration.

I warmly welcome His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, to whom I now give the floor.

The Secretary-General (*spoke in French*): It is a pleasure for me to join the Security Council today for this debate on sexual violence in conflict. All over the world, we are witnessing an appalling number of acts of sexual violence in wartime. No region can escape this scourge, which continues to plague women, girls, boys and men. However, an unprecedented political momentum has made it possible to make clear progress in the fight against such crimes. The international community has finally broken the silence and taboo surrounding the issue.

(*spoke in English*)

Sexual violence is widely recognized as a deliberate strategy used to shred the fabric of society, to control and intimidate communities and to force people from their homes. It is rightly seen as a threat to international peace and security, a serious violation of international humanitarian law and human rights law and a major impediment to post-conflict reconciliation and economic development. The Council has played a significant role in ushering in this change, in particular through several landmark resolutions that confirm sexual violence as a war crime, a crime against humanity and a constituent act of genocide. The designation of 19 June as the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict is a further sign of heightened engagement and commitment.

Over the past decade, I have sought to do whatever I could to end sexual violence in conflict and to uphold the rights of women and girls everywhere. I launched my UNiTE Campaign to End Violence against Women and created the post of Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict. Through the work of my Special Representative, the United Nations has agreed frameworks of cooperation and joint communiqués with Governments and regional bodies. The deployment of women protection advisers to peacekeeping and political missions has strengthened the monitoring, analysis and reporting of conflict-related sexual violence and engagement with parties to conflict, which are vital steps towards accountability. The United Nations will continue our own efforts to ensure that peacekeepers uphold the highest standards of integrity towards the people they serve.

Today, we and our partners are supporting thousands of survivors whom we were not reaching a decade ago, with practical measures ranging from reporting hotlines to community-based care. Those policies not only help survivors, they enable societies to begin their own recovery.

International jurisprudence has also been developed around sexual violence in conflict, leading to landmark cases against political and military leaders. The recent conviction of Jean-Pierre Bemba Gombo by the International Criminal Court was the latest sign that the era of impunity for sexual violence as a tool of war is over.

The past decade has shown that progress is possible, even in the most difficult and intractable situations. However, we still face serious challenges. My latest annual report (S/2016/361) covers 19 situations of concern and lists dozens of parties that systematically commit such crimes. One extremely disturbing aspect is the use of sexual violence as a tactic of terrorism. Da'esh, Boko Haram and other extremist groups are using sexual violence as a means of attracting and retaining fighters, and to generate revenue. It is estimated that the Yazidi community gave Da'esh up to $45 million in ransom payments in 2014 alone. Abducted women, men, girls and boys suffer the most terrible trauma through brutal physical and sexual assault, child and forced marriages and sexual slavery on a massive scale. The abduction of more than 200 girls from Chibok, Nigeria, more than two years ago, is one of the most horrific examples of the use of sexual violence as a tactic of terrorism.

I call for the immediate release of all those taken captive, and for care and support for those who return, who can suffer from social isolation and depression. Women and girls with children may need special medical and psychosocial support, which must extend to the children themselves, who can suffer complete rejection. The shame and social stigma faced by those women and children should be redirected towards the brutal perpetrators of violence.

We must continue to speak up for the women, girls, men and boys whose bodies for too long have been considered the spoils of war. I look forward to a strong and unified response from the Council to the concerns raised in my report.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Secretary-General for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Bangura.

Ms. Bangura: I wish to thank the Government of France for hosting this open debate and the Council for the priority accorded to this issue. I am grateful to the Secretary-General for his personal presence and unwavering support. I appreciate also that Lisa Davis of MADRE is able to join us today to give voice to civil society, which is a moral compass for this mandate. I am grateful that Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, is also here.

As highlighted by the Secretary-General, in the past decade we have witnessed a fundamental shift in the way this issue is understood and addressed as a peace and security concern, and there has been unprecedented progress. Yet, even as we make gains, new and critical challenges have emerged. Today, as we deliberate here, women are being traded in an open slave bazaar in Raqqa. Price lists exist to regulate their sale, like livestock at a farmers' market. A so-called fatwa has been issued by Da'esh that codifies sexual slavery, in attempt to justify sexual violence through holy scriptures. Social media platforms are being used to facilitate trade and trafficking — women and children are offered in the same online forums as rifles and rocket-propelled grenades.

> "This one is young, beautiful and good in bed. I need at least $7,500 for her. You won't regret it."

That is part of the message thread under a photograph of a girl painted with bright red lipstick. She cannot be older than 12 years of age. Eventually, the winning bid was $7,700, offered by a Libyan fighter of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant.

When I visited the Middle East last year, I met with girls who had escaped captivity. Some of them told me that they had been the objects of as many as eight separate transactions during two years of captivity, before finally escaping or being ransomed by their families. But thousands more are missing — in Syria, Iraq, Nigeria and elsewhere.

The report (S/2016/361) before the Security Council today is the eighth dedicated account of conflict-related sexual violence.

The report before the Council today (S/2016/361) is the eighth dedicated account of conflict-related sexual violence. Cumulatively, these reports build a historic record for a crime that has long been omitted from official accounts of war and peace. As the report outlines in harrowing detail, we are confronting new and previously unforeseen threats. Just as we make inroads with national security forces, the problem of sexual violence committed by non-State actors acquires ever-more difficult and disturbing dimensions. Let us consider the fact that of the 48 parties listed in the annex of the Secretary-General's report, 37 are non-State armed actors. Yet, the instruments that we have as a United Nations system are primarily to engage Member States.

Therefore, new tools and approaches will be required to enforce the compliance of these actors, who often vary dramatically in character, composition, motivations, capacity and modus oparandi. We face both political and operational challenges in this regard, but if we are to eradicate sexual violence in conflict, this mandate must focus on the persistent perpetrators and will require the support of the Security Council to do so. At the same time, we must confront the new reality that sexual violence today is used not only as a tactic of war, but also as a tactic of terrorism.

Without exception, the first sign of rising violent extremism has been the restriction of women's rights. Extremists know that to populate a territory and control a population, one must first control the bodies of women. Sexual violence is not merely incidental, but integral to their ideology and strategic objectives. They are using sexual violence as a means of advancing political, military and economic ends. They have used rape and forced marriage as part of the systems of punishment and reward through which they consolidate power, and to build a so-called State cast in their own image and beliefs. The same litany of horrors echoes across the accounts of Nigerian girls who fled Boko Haram, the tales of Somali women liberated from Al-Shabaab, and the depictions of women's lives in northern Mali under the extremist group Ansar Eddine.

When we think of terrorism, we think of the destruction of property, killing, bombing or hostage-taking. But we cannot deplore the public violence of terrorism while ignoring the violence terrorists inflict on women and girls in private, behind closed doors. We must also confront the reality that after all they have endured in captivity, many victims of Da'esh and Boko Haram face the additional heartbreak of being shunned by their own communities if they return. Sexual violence is still the only crime that stigmatizes the victim rather than the perpetrator. We must not only bring back our girls; we must bring them back to an environment of support, equality and opportunity. Social and economic reintegration is imperative and must become a more integral part of our programmatic response and post-conflict development frameworks.

The war of conquest of extremist groups is being fought on — and fought over — the bodies of women and girls, generating millions of dollars in revenue. This is not just objectification; it is commodification. It is the revival of the slave trade in our own times and lives. The promise of access to wives and sex slaves is used to attract recruits and serves as a form of compensation for fighters. Each time a woman is traded, the transaction generates a profit. It is part of the political economy of terrorism, just like the sale of oil, antiquities or drugs.

If these groups are beyond the reach of judicial deterrence, then we must focus on divesting them of resources and degrading their capacity to communicate, travel, trade and do harm. This must form a part of our global, regional and national strategies to counter terrorism and violent extremism. As the report notes,

> "counter-terrorism strategies can no longer be decoupled from efforts to protect and empower women and girls and to combat conflict-related sexual violence" (*ibid, para. 1*).

Through our sanctions infrastructure, we must raise the cost of these crimes, because the human costs defy calculation;

Through strategic communication, a counternarrative must ring out loud, clear and consistent that the human, sexual and reproductive rights of women and girls are non-negotiable. Traditional and religious leaders must use their moral authority to negate any attempt to legitimize rape on religious grounds. Our response must recognize and address the nexus of conflict-related sexual violence with cross-border trafficking to fund conflict and terrorism. Our normative framework, including the resolutions of the Council, must keep pace with the changing global security context and the new dimension of sexual violence deployed as a tactic of terrorism.

The report also sheds light on other emerging concerns that are not yet adequately treated within the ambit of the resolutions on sexual violence in conflict. This includes the plight of children born of wartime rape, who also live in shadow and shame. They are often undocumented and stateless; indeed, there may be thousands of such children living on the peripheries of their communities, who are fertile ground for radicalization and recruitment. Failure to recognize these children, to nurture and protect them represents a long-term threat to peace and security;

We have begun focusing more attention in the past few years on sexual violence against men and boys, which is a particular concern in the context of detention and interrogation. But unfortunately, male survivors are still a blind-spot in our monitoring, not to mention service response;

The mass migration crisis has heightened the risk of sexual violence, including in places of supposed refuge. We understand more clearly than ever before the acute vulnerability of refugees and internally displaced persons not only within camps or settlements, but at every stage of displacement, and how sexual violence may be a significant push factor for displacement.

This year, in the case of Burundi, which appears in the Secretary-General's report for the first time, we have received information of the targeting of women and girls on the basis of actual or perceived political affiliation or ethnic identity, with rape employed as a tool of political repression by arms bearers, including members of national security forces. Sexual crimes used as part of the repertoire of violence during contested elections or public demonstrations are a long-standing concern of the Council, from Kenya in 2007 to Guinea in 2009 and Côte D'Ivoire in 2011. It represents another dimension of this agenda that will require continued vigilance and tailored responses.

My emphasis since taking office has been on fostering national ownership, leadership and responsibility, which has required focused engagement in the affected countries. The advances of a number of national Governments that we support through our Team of Experts are encouraging and show that this is not a mission impossible. In the past two years, we have gained a more intimate understanding of how the resolutions of the Council can be turned into solutions on the ground. At the same time, we also have clearer sight of what is missing in the normative framework of resolutions that are our conceptual and operational guide.

That is why I ask the Council, on basis of the report, to continue deliberations in the coming weeks and to consider a new draft resolution that will give us the tools for a comprehensive and multidimensional response that takes into account the rapidly shifting international peace and security landscape. I believe in the unity of purpose of the Council to give us what is needed to eradicate this crime once and for all.

The past decade has seen greater progress and political momentum to end war-time rape than in the rest of human history combined. I believe that we are on the brink of converting a centuries-old culture of impunity into a culture of accountability and deterrence. But at this crucial juncture, we cannot afford to be complacent or lose our focus; we must meet the new challenges on the horizon and we must keep the searchlight of international scrutiny on this historically silenced crime. When survivors tell us that "our bodies are worth less here than a dead rat", it diminishes our collective humanity.

Ultimately, all our words and laws and resolutions will mean nothing if violations go unpunished in practice and we are unable to increase the cost and consequences for committing such crimes.

To the victims and perpetrators alike, I would send a simple but unequivocal message — that justice may be delayed, but it will not be denied, and that the international community is steadfast and committed to living up to its sacred duty to prevent these crimes and care for survivors.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Ms. Bangura for her briefing and for her exemplary commitment in combating sexual violence in conflict.

I now give the floor to Ms. Giammarinaro.

Ms. Giammarinaro: It is a great honour for me to be able to address the Security Council today. This is the first time that my Office has been invited to contribute to an open debate, and I thank the Council profusely for that. I am encouraged to see that the issue of trafficking in persons in armed conflict and post-conflict situations continues to be addressed by the Security Council, including through presidential statement S/PRST/2015/25, of December 2015, and today's open debate.

Since assuming the functions of my mandate as Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, in August 2014, I have identified the impact of conflict on trafficking in persons for purposes of sexual, labour and other forms of exploitation as an issue that warrants further research and international attention. I will report on this issue to the Human Rights Council in a few days.

Trafficking in persons — and this is the first message I would like to convey to the Security Council — is without a doubt underreported in the context of recent conflicts. What is trafficking? Trafficking is actually an umbrella concep that encompasses various forms of exploitation, and exploitation is the essence of trafficking.

Recent reports — such as those published by the International Organization for Migration and Caritas Internationalis, and other initiatives, such as the Migrants in Countries in Crisis Initiative, led by the United States and the Philippines, have shown that trafficking in persons in conflict and crisis situations is not a mere possibility or isolated incident; rather, it happens on a regular basis as a consequence of conflict. That is what suggests that we have to do better and we have to do more.

Why is trafficking a consequence of conflict on a regular basis? It is because conflict is accompanied by a breakdown in public institutions and a collapse of the rule of law. Existing vulnerabilities of minority groups — for example, of women and children — become more significant and new vulnerable groups emerge. This is a situation in which traffickers and exploiters can take advantage to enslave and exploit people. Conflict-related violence, such as sexual violence, can itself be a driver of forced internal displacement, which in turn increases vulnerability to further exploitation, including through trafficking.

We must also deal with trafficking as a consequence of a large influx of people fleeing conflict. We have seen, for example, how many pregnant women are crossing the Mediterranean Sea every day — and they are pregnant as a consequence of rape and sexual violence and exploitation borne in transit countries. For the millions of people who are forced to flee their countries because of armed conflict, the journey of escape has become increasingly expensive and hazardous. The Syrian conflict in particular is causing a massive exodus that should be considered a global humanitarian crisis. Unfortunately, we have to admit that the European Union (EU), EU countries and the international community at large have mostly failed in addressing this crisis. The result is that hundreds of people, including many children, have lost their lives in the Mediterranean Sea and, as we speak, people continue to be at risk of losing their lives.

We must also consider that, for those surviving their perilous journey, there is a tangible risk of trafficking-related exploitation. Throughout their journey and at their destination, migrants, including refugees and asylum seekers, who have sold all their possessions to pay for their travel, are highly vulnerable to physical violence, sexual assault, extortion and trafficking. For such migrants, the clandestine nature of their journey, the often unscrupulous and corrupt conduct of their facilitators and collaborators and the extent to which some States will go to prevent their departure, transit or arrival all operate to create or exacerbate opportunities for traffickers who prey on their precarious situation. Therefore, even if they were not trafficked from the very beginning of their journey, they can become trafficked during the process. For instance, Rohingya from Myanmar typically embark on maritime and overland journeys, often via Thailand, to irregularly reach Malaysia. Initially smuggled across borders, some are subsequently trafficked to fishing boats and palm oil plantations for labour exploitation, ending up in bonded labour to repay the debts incurred from the transport. Others are held captive and abused in Malaysia until ransom is paid by their relatives.

The conclusion is clear: not all people fleeing conflict are victims of trafficking in persons, from a legal point of view at least. However, trafficking in persons for the purpose of exploitation, even extreme exploitation, be it sexual or labour or other forms of exploitation, can occur any time. Recently, an egregious pattern of abductions from their homes or schools of women and girls who are subsequently forced to marry and/or serve as sex slaves has been reported in conflict-affected settings. Those violations are perpetrated by groups such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and Boko Haram, but I will not comment on this because the Special Representative of the Secretary-General touched upon it.

Let me say a few words about peacekeeping operations. Peacekeeping operations, unfortunately, continue to be theatres for shameful incidents of sexual violence and abuse, which undermine their vital role in protecting communities, including women and children, from the violence and exploitation that is common in post-conflict situations. However, abuse and exploitation by peacekeepers again has been underreported when it amounts to trafficking, in contrast to other conflicts occurring in the past, such as the Balkan conflict. Again, we have to think that it is imperative to better identify and detect cases of sexual exploitation amounting to trafficking in this area.

Let me very briefly highlight some linkages between trafficking and conflict or post-conflict situations that are much less known or investigated. For example, the trafficking of migrant workers into conflict zones for the purpose of labour exploitation is so far a completely hidden issue. While not all cases of contracting and subcontracting involve trafficking for labour exploitation, there have been cases where large firms that hold the primary contract with States and their militaries hire migrant workers through smaller subcontractors or local employment agencies to perform tasks, including cleaning, construction, cooking and serving, and haircutting.

Often the conditions of trafficking for labour exploitation also favour sexual violence and exploitation. Out of the reach of workplace protections, discrimination, harassment, unsafe conditions, and the exploitation and abuse of women are common. In such situations, women and girls are often subjected simultaneously to labour and sexual exploitation .

Secondly, persons fleeing conflict could also be vulnerable to trafficking for the purposes of organ removal. Cases of that nature have been detected.

Thirdly, Syrian refugee women and girls are trafficked for sexual exploitation through the practice of temporary marriages, child marriage or forced marriages. The girls and women concerned are often forcibly married by their parents. Through such marriages, they may be trafficked for forced prostitution, and marriages with foreign men can also lead to situations of forced prostitution and trafficking.

Fourthly, in the post-conflict climate, the vulnerability of women and girls to trafficking-related exploitation is heightened by their relative lack of access to resources, education, documentation and so forth.

Fifthly, after fleeing conflict, children may be compelled to work to sustain themselves and to support their families. Iraqi and Syrian refugee children in Lebanon, for example, work in textile factories, in construction, in the food-service industry, in agricultural labour or as street vendors. That is, of course, not limited to Lebanon, which has generous policies for accepting refugees from Syria. It is just an example of the fact that children in such situations can become primary breadwinners and therefore particularly vulnerable to exploitation.

What can be done to address the issue of trafficking? I have just a few comments. I also want to touch upon issues related to peacekeeping because, of course, Ms. Bangura elaborated on that. Let me just say a few words concerning trafficking in persons for the purpose of labour exploitation.

I think that the same level of attention and initiative that has been devoted to sexual exploitation should be attached to labour exploitation by the entire United Nations system. In particular, State-contracting agencies should exercise due diligence when employing workers, including migrant workers. They should employ workers directly whenever possible, ensure that private individuals or the companies they have contracted or subcontracted with protect the rights of workers, including decent working and living conditions, their right to return and their freedom of assembly and association. They should also establish a zero-tolerance policy for violations of those workers' fundamental rights.

Last but certainly not least, the protection of people during conflict and of people fleeing conflict is now the top priority. Anti-trafficking measures should be incorporated into all humanitarian interventions in conflict zones. In particular, United Nations agencies and programmes, and international and humanitarian organizations should include the prevention of trafficking in persons as part of their life-saving protection activities from the outset of a conflict-crisis, whether or not trafficking incidents have been detected.

In reception centres for migrants, hot spots, and centres for asylum seekers and refugees and in administrative detention centres for migrants, appropriate procedures should be established and carried out by trained personnel, preferably in cooperation with civil-society organizations, aimed at assessing the grounds for international protection, the grounds for child protection, the indications of trafficking and the risks of trafficking and exploitation. Where such indications have been found, tailored solutions should be identified in every individual case, based on international protection grounds or on other protection grounds, including the granting of assistance, residence permits and compensation for trafficked persons and job opportunities for trafficking victims and people at risk of trafficking and exploitation. In that context, the protection of children is paramount. Children must never be detained on immigration grounds, and a durable solution must be identified on a case-by-case basis in the best interests of the child.

I look forward to an open and fruitful debate.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Ms. Giammarinaro for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Davis.

Ms. Davis: I speak today on behalf of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, and in my capacity as the Human Rights Advocacy Director for MADRE, as well as a Working Group member.

Sexual violence and gender-based crimes are a constant threat for many local women's organizations and activists working on the front lines of conflict, while survivors of such violence face immense obstacles impeding their access to life-saving services. Impunity for those crimes remains the norm. All the while, women are excluded from peace and reconciliation processes and from the design of policies to counter terrorism and prevent violent extremism.

While sexual and gender-based violence is prevalent across conflicts today, it is not a new phenomenon. It is part of broader structural violence that is rooted in attacks on gender equality and women's rights and freedoms. Such oppressive gender narratives perpetuate many different forms of violence. From Colombia to Syria and Myanmar, many NGO Working Group members have seen how conflict paves the way for a wide range of abuses against women and girls. Today, as the Security Council focuses on violent extremism, we will highlight a number of areas that need urgent attention.

First, there is the humanitarian response. Member States must fulfil their obligations to those fleeing conflict-related violence. There is much talk today of strengthening international collaboration on protection strategies and accountability mechanisms. At the same time, however, Member States have been closing their borders to those fleeing violence. Such contradictory actions cannot stand.

Women and girls face daily threats from both combatants and non-combatants, including rape, trafficking and other rights violations as they flee conflict-related violence. They are at risk in displaced persons camps and when leaving camps to conduct essential livelihood activities. In many of those settings, gender-based violence is also perpetrated by intimate partners, family members and civilians, including humanitarian-aid staff. Refugee women and girls are often unable to access basic services, including the full range of sexual and reproductive health care, psychosocial support and access to justice. The protection risks that women and girls face in humanitarian crises are compounded by the shame and stigma that accompany sexual violence. We urge donor States to fund comprehensive and non-discriminatory sexual and reproductive health care, including access to safe abortion services in humanitarian settings and in line with international humanitarian law.

Local women's organizations must be supported by the international community. Local women's organizations not only provide shelter for the most vulnerable, but they also act as first responders, offering much needed aid and peer-to-peer support to survivors of trafficking and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence. Member States should take action on the recent commitments made at the recent World Humanitarian Summit and take practical steps to support new financing mechanisms for women and girls as leaders and decision-makers, to reduce vulnerability, including vulnerability to trafficking, to ensure access to sexual and reproductive health care in crisis settings, and to end impunity.

Secondly, there are threats against female human rights defenders. All Governments, including those on the Security Council, must condemn the increased crackdowns on women human rights defenders and women's organizations. All national security strategies, including those relating to preventing and combating violent extremism, should be grounded in a human rights framework and adhere to international humanitarian law.

As members of the Working Group have reported in numerous countries, speaking out about conflict-related sexual violence is extremely dangerous, especially in cases where State actors are implicated as perpetrators. Local activists who speak up about rape by security forces often face imprisonment, threats of rape and deliberate efforts to tar their reputations. Often impunity still reigns for those crimes. Under the guise of countering violent extremism, Governments around the world are invoking national security concerns to justify the systematic harassment, arrest and detention of women activists and providers. That securitized and militarized framework also contributes to the shrinking of civil society space.

The efforts of the international community to address the threats of violent extremism cannot succeed while women's human rights defenders are under threat. As our colleagues engaging in the dangerous work of defending women's rights know, the bitter irony is that policymakers often speak to the importance of that work while doing little to support it in practice. From Syria to Afghanistan, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, our brave colleagues continue to work in conflict zones, facing death threats and sometimes paying the ultimate price for their work.

Thirdly, with regard to justice and accountability, documentation of combatant violence committed against all marginalized persons must be supported. For example, in Iraq and Syria local and international groups are documenting human rights abuses committed against women, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons, and other minorities that defy gender stereotypes. Those issues were raised last year when the Security Council held the first-ever Arria Formula meeting to address LGBTI rights. When such violations in conflict are not exposed, history teaches that they are often left out of the human rights discourse and transitional justice processes. The Council should support those documentation efforts and ensure that crimes committed against all marginalized persons in conflict are accounted for in tribunals and other transitional justice processes.

The international community has a range of options to support access to justice at the local, national, and international levels. The recent landmark conviction of former Chadian President Hissène Habré is a reminder that while the wheels of justice turn slowly, they do turn, and it is possible to achieve accountability for crimes that include rape and sexual slavery. The Security Council and other Member States should expand political and financial support to accountability efforts, including through referrals to the International Criminal Court and ensuring that those with arrest warrants against them face trial in The Hague.

Fourthly, turning to the Security Council and peacekeeping, the Council must dramatically improve its daily implementation of women, peace and security obligations. It must better link protection efforts with women's participation and rights, and call on mission staff to hold regular consultations with women's local civil society organizations and with women and girls in displacement settings. Addressing and preventing sexual violence in conflict also requires taking steps to improve peacekeeping and prevent sexual exploitation and abuse, including through better vetting and accountability measures for peacekeepers. Moreover, the Security Council should ensure adequate protection mechanisms for the courageous whistleblowers who bring those crimes forward.

The Council must ensure that it prioritizes and promotes women's rights and participation through its work. The Council has made numerous commitments to those necessary steps, including in recent resolutions. It is time to implement those existing commitments. While formal peace negotiations must be transparent and inclusive of local women peacemakers, their work must also be supported in the long term. Peace talks must not merely tick the gender-representation box, but instead meaningfully and holistically include women and civil society.

Finally, with regard to the necessary steps on prevention, we cannot emphasize enough the urgent need to curb the flow of guns and other weapons, which exacerbate levels of sexual and gender-based violence. The Security Council must confront that issue, including by encouraging States to ratify the Arms Trade Treaty and establish enforceable national and regional regulations on small arms, consistent with general recommendation No. 30 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. Prevention efforts must also address the role of governmental and non-governmental actors alike in facilitating trafficking, including the role of military bases as trafficking hubs.

In conclusion, The horrific sexual violence perpetrated by State actors, militias and extremists does not take place in a vacuum. It is part of a continuum of violence across societies, in which women's rights are degraded and gender inequality is the norm. Armed conflict magnifies those problems. Comprehensively addressing the rights and humanitarian needs of women and girls fleeing conflict requires addressing those pre-existing inequalities. This contextual analysis sheds light on sustainable solutions to long-standing human rights violations that are exacerbated by conflict. As we face multiple crises and conflicts today, this approach to social change will help us, as an international community, weave solutions out of uncertainty and build a more equitable foundation for the future.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Ms. Davis for her briefing.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Ms. Sison (United States of America): I thank you, Sir, for chairing and having organized this open debate and included the perspectives of civil society in our discussion. I also thank the Secretary-General for his briefing and leadership on this critical issue, and Special Representative Bangura, Special Rapporteur Giammarinaro and Ms. Davis for their briefings.

The Council has long recognized that sexual and gender-based violence not only abuses and violates the human rights of its victims, but also undermines the security, livelihood and health of nations by suppressing survivors' participation in civic, social, political and economic life. We have put in many place many tools for countering conflict-related sexual violence inflicted by State and non-State armed groups, improving accountability, bringing perpetrators to justice, documenting violations against marginalized groups of victims, including women and girls, men and boys, ethnic and religious minorities; and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex individuals. But we must do a better job making use of these tools.

We commend Special Representative Bangura for her energetic efforts to translate the Council's resolutions into real, on-the-ground action. Her work with the national militaries of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and armed groups on both sides of the conflict in South Sudan to help develop structures to hold perpetrators accountable for their actions has been particularly noteworthy. We also applaud her efforts to support the investigation of the 2009 stadium massacre in Guinea. In addition to the Special Representative's efforts, we value the work carried out by the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, which has assisted countries in the areas investigations and prosecutions, strengthening legal frameworks and ensuring the protection of victims and witnesses. However, significant challenges remain in countering sexual violence in conflict, especially when it comes to holding non-State armed groups and their partners and associates accountable for their crimes.

In resolution 2242 (2015), the Council recognized the nexus of sexual violence, terrorism and violent extremism, which can be conducive to terrorism. We have seen steady growth in the use of sexual violence against women, men, girls and boys by terrorists not only in Iraq and Syria, but also in Somalia, Nigeria and Mali. Non-State armed groups like the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) use sexual violence in a premeditated and systemic way to recruit fighters, raise money and intimidate and demoralize communities in order to consolidate their hold over territory. Resolutions 2199 (2015) and 2253 (2015) not only strongly condemn such acts by ISIL, Al-Qaida and their associates, but also work to strengthen accountability by encouraging all State and non-State actors with evidence to bring it to the attention of the Council. The Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida, and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities represents a vital tool for us to punish perpetrators, since any individual who makes funds or other financial and economic resources available to ISIL and other terrorist groups, in connection with sexual violence, is eligible for designation in the 1267 sanctions regime. We must make full use of those tools.

As noted by Special Rapporteur Giammarinaro, we also need to more to protect displaced women and girls whose heightened vulnerability puts them at increased risk of sexual violence and trafficking. Over the past year, we have seen the continuation of mass migration from Syria, Iraq and the Horn of Africa. Reports of smugglers demanding sex as payment of passage are rampant and part of a global surge in human trafficking. With regard to Ms. Davis' intervention, that is why last month at the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul, the United States announced an additional $10 million contribution to the Safe from the Start initiative to prevent and respond to gender-based violence in emergency situations.

The United States urges all Member States to condemn such crimes and those who commit them, to properly document such horrors so that one day those responsible can be held accountable, to commit to ending the conflicts that provide an ideal climate for human traffickers, and to commit to eradicating the groups that use human trafficking and conflict-related sexual violence as a weapon of war. Member States must also work to ensure that labour practices, such as charging workers recruitment fees that can lead to debt bondage, do not contribute to human trafficking. We must teach people how to actually see the victims of trafficking. We must also make our resources for victims more victim- and survivor-centred, incorporating victims and survivors into policy-making process so as to yield better solutions.

A further challenge is the lack of global documentation of the phenomenon of sexual and gender-based violence against all vulnerable communities, including those that are too often forgotten in this discourse, namely lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals, as well as men and boys. Those individuals are not only at a heightened risk of facing harassment, abuse and sexual violence committed by armed groups as a result of discriminatory social norms and attitudes, but they also face a strong stigma against reporting such abuses. We commend the Secretary-General for highlighting the victimization of men and boys in his report (S/2016/361).

The United Nations and Member States must more fully embrace a general inclusive approach in sexual violence and gender-based violence programming. There is scant documentation on the subject, with little understanding of the prevailing patterns and the severity of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence against males, as compared to sexual and gender-based violence against girls and women. In addition, the absence of targeted services for male victims not only fails to address the needs of boys and men, but could also contribute to the problem of underreporting.

Bilateral efforts to counter conflict-related sexual violence and to improve accountability and documentation are also crucial. In 2014, the United States launched the Accountability Initiative to support the development of specialized justice-sector mechanisms to improve access to justice for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. We remain committed to strengthening efforts to protect all people from harm, exploitation, discrimination, abuse, gender-based violence and trafficking. We must, as all of the speakers have noted, hold perpetrators accountable, especially in conflict-affected environments.

The United States has also committed nearly $40 million for support to victims of sexual violence in conflict, including in Nigeria, where the United States supports United Nations agencies, community groups and local non-governmental organizations that provide health-care services, including appropriate psychosocial counselling for women and children who have survived Boko Haram's horrific campaign. However, we recognize that support programmes are not enough. In order to combat sexual violence in conflict, women must have a seat at the table in resolving conflicts. Empowered women provide powerful antidotes to violent extremism and have critical contributions to make at every level of our struggle against sexual violence in conflict.

We also need women in uniform to rebuild trust between law enforcement and communities, female correction officers and female counsellors to reach out to female inmates who are on the path to radicalization, and women legislators to support more inclusive public policies that address the unique grievances that drive individuals to terrorism. As Secretary of State Kerry has said, fighting the scourge of sexual violence requires all of those tools, including Security Council resolutions, better reporting and support to survivors. It especially requires holding criminals accountable and ending impunity. Instead of shaming the survivors, we must punish the perpetrators, and we must be ready to support and empower the survivors as they work to rebuild their lives.

Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi (Spain) (*spoke in French*): I thank the French presidency for organizing this open debate on the theme "Women and peace and security: Responding to human trafficking in situations of conflict-related sexual violence". Sir, you can rest assured that the French presidency will have the full cooperation of the Spanish delegation. We also thank the Egyptian presidency for the work undertaken, and I also thank today's panellists for their briefings.

(*spoke in Spanish*)

Almost 10 years ago, in 2008, we adopted resolution 1820 (2008). which has, in my view, the great merit of being the first resolution in which the Security Council examined exclusively the tragic problem of sexual violence in armed conflict. In that resolution, the Security Council concluded that sexual violence could be avoided if we establish appropriate prevention mechanisms, as well as mechanisms of condemnation, suppression and sanctions. We are now getting close to the tenth anniversary of resolution 1820 (2008) and, unfortunately, during the time since 2008, sexual violence in armed conflict has increased. It has increased in a very disturbing fashion.

What does that mean? It means that the Security Council has to do quite a bit more, and we members are those responsible for the actions of the Security Council. I believe that we have the support of all members of the Security Council in the commitment to strengthen the fight against sexual violence. The best example of that commitment can be seen in the Chamber today. I believe that we have a very large number of non-members of the Security Council that are following the debate. That demonstrate's the larger membership's commitment to the problem under discussion, which is one of the great plagues of humanity.

As sexual violence has increased in recent years, my statement will focus on proposing five specific measures that I believe could strengthen the mechanisms of the condemnation, prevention and sanctioning of sexual violence in armed conflict. The first proposal refers to the very valuable Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Bangura, with whom I have always been in very close contact. She has explained to me on more than one occasion that, with regard to the 48 parties to conflict mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2016/361), there is a very important piece of information about those entities, namely, that of those 48 parties, only five are States. All of the others are non-State actors, of which seven are terrorist groups. That means that the nature of the sexual violence in conflict has clearly changed, in that we now have new actors — the non-State actors. That is why Spain's first proposal would be to strengthen the mandate of the Special Representative. Let us think, as members of the Security Council, about how we can ensure that the Special Representative could have more effective instruments to fight against sexual violence in conflict, with particular reference to non-State actors.

The second proposal is of a more cross-cutting nature. Perhaps it affects the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially in women and children, more. I believe that we have all read the media reports about the $35 to $45 million that Da'esh obtained for the release of 200 Yazidi women. I believe that it is important for the international community to establish cooperation mechanisms, so that the fight against trafficking in situations of sexual violence in armed conflict could be prevented better and be sanctioned. I believe that we have to think about integrating trafficking into all of our judicial and police cooperation mechanisms, both internationally and regionally. I accord a great deal of importance to the regional level. In the context of judicial cooperation, a key actor on which we have to count is INTERPOL, which perhaps should strengthen its mechanisms for combating trafficking.

The third proposal is directed primarily to the members of the Security Council, and the Ambassador of the United States made reference to this. The Council has at its disposal a set of very important tools, particularly the sanctions committees. The Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999) concerning Al-Qaida and the Taliban and associated individuals and entities could have something important to say about certain very specific situations. For example, in situations of human trafficking involving women and girls, it is obvious that qualified professionals are involved in administering hormones to and sterilizing women who are then trafficked. I propose that persons who commit this type of crime be subject to sanctions by the corresponding sanctions committee, in particular the 1267 Committee.

My fourth proposal refers to women protection advisers in all United Nations missions. We all know that not all peacekeeping missions have women protection advisers. In some cases, which is even more serious, when there are women protection advisers, those positions are funded by voluntary contributions. Here the Security Council and in particular all of the penholders have a very special responsibility: to ensure that when the mandates of peacekeeping operations are extended, we specify the need for the inclusion of women protection advisers in each and every one of them; ideally, they would be financed by the regular budget of the Organization.

Lastly, the fifth measure refers to impunity, but I would say that it refers even more to the victims, to the tragedy of the victims of sexual violence whose chilling accounts we often have the privilege of hearing in this Chamber.

I would note two very concrete measures. First, although we have recognized that sexual violence is used as a tactic of terrorism, why can we not recognize as well the fact that the victims of sexual violence are victims of terrorism and, as a result, should benefit from the same level of protection and attention as the victims of terrorism, at both the international and national levels.

The second proposal is of a more cross-cutting nature, involving awareness-raising in all areas, in particular when it comes to religious leaders, to incorporate the fight against sexual violence into initiatives of interreligious dialogue, such as KAICIID or the Alliance of Civilizations.

I believe that we have time; I hope that when the tenth anniversary of resolution 1820 (2008) comes along, we will be able to say that we responded in time to reverse the trend of sexual violence in armed conflict, and that the situation in 2018 will be better than it is today, thanks to the initiative of the French presidency of convening this debate, which could not be more timely.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me, at the outset, to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this open debate early on in the French presidency of the Security Council focusing on the crime of human trafficking, which is intrinsically linked to sexual violence, particularly that perpetrated by terrorists and armed groups.

I should like also to thank the Secretary-General and Ms. Zainab Bangura for their briefings on the annual report on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2016/361). This year's report has particular importance, as it is the first report to be issued following the adoption by the Security Council of resolution 2242 (2015), which recognizes sexual violence as a tactic of war and terror, as well as the inseparability of the strategies for dispute settlement and the combat against terrorism from efforts to protect and empower women and girls and combat sexual violence in armed conflict.

Today's meeting also has particular importance because of the inaugural commemoration by the General Assembly on 19 June of the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict.

Egypt co-sponsored resolution 2242 (2015) on the basis of its conviction that the settlement of disputes cannot be separated from efforts to protect and empower women and girls and eliminate conflict-related sexual violence. I would like in this context the stress the following.

Egypt has supported the efforts made to include women at all levels of efforts to achieve peace and security since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) and the agenda on women and peace and security. This is reflected in the many efforts made at the national and regional levels. The national women's council of Egypt developed a national policy to follow up the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000); Egypt is one of 17 African States that have developed similar national plans. Egypt, in the 15 years since the adoption of the resolution, has organized a number of relevant activities, including two regional workshops in cooperation with the United Nations and the League of Arab States.

Egypt also attaches particular importance to issues related to training and capacity-building. The Cairo regional training centre has held seven workshops, two of them to train the trainers, as well as a workshop dedicated to training personnel and exchanging experiences on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) from 2013 to 2015. This will be complemented by the convening of five additional training courses in the same field until June 2016. We stress our commitment to the initiative of the Secretary-General not to be lenient with regard to sexual crimes, and we will continue to cooperate with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Security Council to eliminate all forms of violence against women in the context of peacekeeping operations.

Egypt stresses the importance of limiting the report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence to the nature and the mandate given it under the Security Council resolutions establishing this mandate. It was noted this year that the report of the Secretary-General focuses on issues that are outside the context of these mandates. In the same context, Egypt believes it important for future reports of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence to focus only on conflict-affected regions and not touch upon controversial ideas that are not agreed on internationally, so that we can implement the letter and the spirit of resolution 1325 (2000).

Egypt attaches great importance to unity of purpose and believes that we should not touch upon issues that would fragment our focus on core issues related to sexual violence in armed conflict. Egypt believes that this issue should be included in every United Nations mandate. In that regard, we must provide human and material resources for the implementation of such mandates. Egypt appreciates the role played by the Peacebuilding Fund in promoting programmes on women's empowerment.

We believe that it is extremely important to discuss the women and peace and security agenda from the perspective of women under foreign occupation, in particular with regard to the status of Palestinian women.

Egypt emphasizes the importance of States raising awareness of sexual violence as a tactic of terror and to recognize officially that victims of sexual violence are victims of terrorism, so that we can develop counter-narratives and strategies against terrorism and compensate victims. We must not forget the important and vital role played by religious leaders in turning the stigma endured by victims against perpetrators in order to ensure that terrorism and extremism do not have the upper hand in the intellectual battle, including attempts by extremists to justify rape via religion.

With regard to human trafficking, I would like to note the conclusions drawn by the Special Representative today. Egypt was among the first States to join the Belarus initiative of the Group of Friends United against Human Trafficking. Egypt also supports the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, including the meeting to be held in October 2017. Various reports and studies have also shown that there is a very close link between human trafficking and terrorism. Egypt therefore calls for concerted international efforts in support of the Plan of Action and the valuable efforts made by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to ensure that the actions of the various United Nations bodies will not be duplicated or fragmentary.

In conclusion, Egypt expresses its full commitment to the development and implementation of the women and peace and security agenda during its membership of the Security Council. Egypt looks forward to continued cooperation and full coordination with Ms. Bangura and her Office on various issues under her mandate.

I would be remiss if I were to fail to thank you, Mr. President, for your kind words to the Egyptian presidency of the Council. In return, I wish you Godspeed and success during your own presidency.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China would like to thank the French presidency for its initiative in holding today's open debate. I also thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Special Representative Bangura and Special Rapporteur Giammarinaro for their briefings. I also express my thanks for the briefing by the representative of civil society.

Local conflicts are currently ongoing. Conflict-related sexual violence, including trafficking in persons, especially in women and girls, is a very serious matter. Parties to conflicts are using such activities as trafficking in persons to raise funds and are utilizing sexual violence as a weapon of war. Vulnerable groups, such as women and girls, have become victims and bear the brunt. As victims, their lives, security, health and dignity are seriously threatened. China strongly condemns and resolutely opposes all forms of conflict-related sexual violence, including trafficking in persons, especially in women and girls. We support the international community's adoption of a zero-tolerance policy and its effective implementation of S/PRST/2015/25, which comprehensively addresses trafficking in persons, especially in women and girls in armed conflict. China would like to highlight the following points.

First, there is a need to put an end to wars and conflicts as soon as possible in order to achieve peace and development in conflict areas. That would serve to eradicate the phenomenon of conflict-related sexual violence, including trafficking in persons, especially in women and girls, at its roots. The parties concerned should adhere to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations by engaging in dialogue and consultation to settle their disputes peaceably. The international community should attach importance to economic reconstruction and development in post-conflict countries, facilitate the empowerment of women and comprehensively raise the status of women by allowing women to become the masters of their own destinies and serve as a significant force in promoting the development of their countries.

Secondly, we must scale up efforts to fight the forces of terrorism and violent extremism. The Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham and other terrorist organizations take advantage of local conflicts to raise funds by trafficking in women and girls and engaging in sexual slavery and exploitation, as well as using sexual violence as a weapon of war. That is very cruel. Any and all acts of terrorism — wherever, whenever, by whosoever committed and for whatever motives — are unforgivable crimes. The international community should effectively implement political commitments, adhere to a uniform standard, resolutely counter all forms of terrorism and strengthen international coordination on counter-terrorism.

Thirdly, there is a need to fully respect the sovereignty of the affected countries and leverage the leading role of such countries. They are the main parties responsible for protecting their nationals. They must bear the primary responsibility for protecting women and girls and countering trafficking in persons, especially in women and girls. The international community should support the countries affected in adopting countermeasures in the light of their particular conditions and effectively counter trafficking in persons, in particular in women and girls. Against the backdrop of the needs of the countries affected, the international community should also provide them with assistance, in terms of financial, human and technical resources, as well as strengthen their capacity-building in combating trafficking in women and girls in conflicts, so as to enable the victims to access social and medical assistance.

Fourthly, there is a need to bolster international cooperation in countering trafficking in persons, especially in women and girls. At present, trafficking in women and girls has generated a chain of interests involving countries of origin, transit and destination. It is only through close coordination and full cooperation among the relevant countries and international organizations that we can hope to really break that chain of interests and effectively crack down on this transnational crime. At the same time, trafficking in persons, especially in women and girls, in conflict areas touches on several elements, including the empowerment of women, child protection, education, employment and health. The relevant countries and international organizations should extend a helping hand and provide assistance, both material and financial. The World Trade Organization, UN-Women and UNICEF, as well as other organizations, should provide victims with medical, legal and psychosocial assistance to help them to better reintegrate into society.

Protecting women's rights and promoting gender equality constitute the concrete embodiment of progress in human society and civilization. China attaches great importance to the protection of women's rights. Last September, China and UN-Women jointly sponsored the Global Summit on Women. The international community reaffirmed the solemn commitment to the Beijing Declaration and Programme of Action. While implementing the outcome of the Global Summit on Women, China stands ready to continue to work with the international community in jointly fostering an international environment of peace, security and stability, effectively protecting the rights and interests of women and girls and eradicating conflict-related sexual violence, including trafficking in persons, especially in women and girls.

Mr. Minami (Japan): To begin, I would like to express my gratitude to the President for convening this important meeting. I also directly extend my sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General; his Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Bangura; the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, Ms. Giammarinaro; Ms. Davis for their very informative briefings.

We appreciate the Secretary-General's report (S/2016/361), which is very strong and comprehensive. The most significant element of the report is that it brings to light new dimensions of sexual violence employed as a tactic of terrorism by extremist groups to advance their core objectives.

We find it useful, therefore, that the French presidency has decided to focus on the nexus between trafficking in persons and conflict-related sexual violence, as trafficking in persons for sexual purposes is being used more and more systematically by such groups as a tool for recruitment, fundraising and other strategic objectives. These atrocities not only defame humanitarian values and violate human rights law and norms, but also pose a serious threat to international peace and security. Now is the time for the Security Council to reflect on how to counter them and what tools are at our disposal.

In this regard, the Security Council debate of December 2015 (see S/PV.7585) was a historic occasion, in that trafficking in persons was discussed for the first time among the Council members, and it led to the adoption of presidential statement S/PRST/2015/25. We commend the efforts of the United States to initiate this process, and fully support the statement. We hope that the Council continues to deal with this agenda.

Today, I would like to touch upon two points: first, building up national and international normative frameworks; and secondly addressing the issue of non-State actors.

On the first point, it is essential to support and strengthen national ownership, leadership and responsibility to counter sexual violence. In this regard, the reform of national military, police and judiciary sectors should be emphasized to enforce their capacities to prosecute and punish perpetrators. We strongly support the critical work of the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, which Japan continues to assist as its top donor. We value the tangible outcomes of their activities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and other countries.

In the international arena, the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children are the most important and universal normative frameworks. We must also not forget the role of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Additionally, the International Criminal Court (ICC) can serve as a tool to hold perpetrators accountable, while at the same time providing the victims with psychological and physical support through its Trust Fund for Victims, to which Japan makes both personnel and financial contributions. Achieving the universality of the ICC is necessary to put an end to impunity and to alleviate the suffering of victims.

Touching upon my second point, we face the cruel reality that, out of 49 criminal parties named in the Secretary-General's report, the majority is comprised of non-State actors. We therefore cannot put off addressing the fundamental question of how to bring such parties to comply with international norms, including subsequent Security Council resolutions. On this point, we find a ray of hope in the work of Special Representative of the Secretary-General Bangura, who has achieved a breakthrough in the strenuous negotiations with non-State actors in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan and other countries. This is an important step towards finally making progress against these challenges. In order to make effective use of these tangible outcomes in the future, the Security Council should give its utmost support to the mandate of the Office of Special Representative Bangura, including through increased technical and financial assistance.

The era of silence should be replaced by international recognition and concrete actions to turn resolutions into solutions on the ground. Japan stands ready to work actively towards this cause together with the United Nations bodies and other Member States.

Mr. Rosselli (Uruguay) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on having assumed the presidency of the Council and to offer you the full cooperation of the delegation of Uruguay in your work.

(*spoke in Spanish*)

I also thank the delegation of Egypt once again, led by Ambassador Amr Aboulatta and his team, for their work last month.

I further wish to thank you, Sir, for convening this debate and for the concept note before us (S/2016/496, annex). It is very opportune that this meeting should take place this month, almost a year since 19 June was designated as the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict.

We thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his briefing, his efforts in this field and his zero-tolerance policy, which is important to us all, especially those who have made zero tolerance a key element in our participation in peacekeeping missions. We recognize the important and heartfelt briefings made by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Zainab Hawa Bangura; the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, Ms. Maria Grazia Giammarino; and the representative of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, Ms. Lisa Davis.

One of the direct consequences of the proliferation of armed conflicts of various kinds is the existence of more than 60 million refugees and internally displaced persons around the world. Equally alarming is the growing presence and activities of terrorist organizations. In that context, we are concerned by the increase in and growing use of violence against civilians in armed conflict, which are violations of their most basic human rights. My country condemns all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse, and believes that sexual or gender-based violence should be seen not as a cultural condition or characteristic of any one country, but rather as a form of repression and objectionable and unacceptable suppression.

Sexual violence in the form of sexual slavery and forced prostitution, pregnancies, abortions and marriages is aimed not only at violating and attacking its victims, but also — and despite the progress that has been made in international human rights law — at stigmatizing human beings, with consequences not only for individual victims but also for their families, self-esteem and personal development. Similarly, victims of sexual violence may frequently be doubly affected since, being products of such abuse, their sexual and reproductive health suffers irreperable damage.

In that context, Uruguay wishes to touch on the link between sexual violence and the maintenance and financing of terrorist organizations, which use women and girls as rewards or incentives to attract and recruit men and boys, thereby influencing their decision to join such organizations. Uruguay welcomes the report (S/2016/361) of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence, in which he carries out an exhaustive analysis of this scourge and gives special attention to a growing and alarming trend of acts of sexual violence committed by terrorist groups, such as Da'esh, Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram and Al-Qaida, among others.

Very few weapons have the destructive capacity and such devastating effects on the social fabric as sexual violence. Women are repositories of values and traditions of their communities and they convey ethnic and cultural identity through their persons. That results in their being frequent victims and selective targets of these crimes committed as war tactics. Such crimes are often committed by terrorist groups in their effort to perpetuate themselves and to transmit their ideology to a new generation.

Uruguay reiterates its firm condemnation of all forms of trafficking in persons and vigorously rejects this practice, through which women and girls are trafficked mainly for sexual purposes, while terrorist organizations obtain significant sources of income, which allows them to continue to foster hatred and violence.

Equally alarming is the reference by the Secretary-General in his recent report to the use by the Islamic State of medical personnel to administer treatments that are harmful to women to accelerate their physical maturation in order to expedite their sale. Given this reality, we believe that the international community has the duty and moral obligation to take urgent action to put an end to these deplorable acts. Uruguay also condemns the actions carried out by extremist organizations against people who have suffered physical and sexual violence, in particular minorities including lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex people as a result of their real or alleged sexual orientation.

Uruguay understands that fighting sexual violence in armed conflict must be a collective effort. Governments must act on the front line, but the seriousness of this crime and its serious and persistent consequences make it necessary to obtain the support of the international community in order to be able to address it.

Every day, about 500 women who are pregnant and/or with small children die. Most of them are in countries affected by conflict or natural disasters. Similarly, such situations expose them to a growing number of diseases owing to a lack of health care. We therefore emphasize the importance of ensuring the sexual and reproductive rights of women in conflict situations, bearing in mind the fact that all women have the right to freely decide when and how many children they wish to have and the fact that this decision must be respected in every setting in which it arises. That is why Uruguay supported, in the framework of World Humanitarian Summit, the joint statement on sexual and reproductive health in emergency situations. Furthermore, we believe it is necessary to underscore the greater vulnerability to trafficking and sexual violence of girls born in such contexts.

In considering the critical situations that victims find themselves in and the lack of trust in legal systems, Uruguay stresses the importance of discretion and trust for the people in charge of protecting them. In that connection, we must work with actors in the field to ensure the validation of processes that should be carried out immediately once the action has taken place. The creation of a joint work chain of local public institutions, humanitarian assistance and civil society organizations and local and international non-governmental organizations, together with peacekeepers, is the only way to achieve the physical and emotional recovery of victims of sexual violence, their reintegration in society without stigmatization and the orderly and appropriate compilation of data that could be crucial to identify the perpetrators. We also think it is crucial that people who have suffered sexual violence immediately receive comprehensive treatment.

Sexual violence is a serious threat to international peace and security. The Security Council must use the tools at its disposal to tackle this crime. Uruguay believes peacekeeping operations are an important tool for the United Nations in preventing and tackling sexual violence. In that regard, we underscore the deterrent effect that peacekeeping operations could have through their visible presence and monitoring, the consultations they could carry out among different segments of society, in particular with women, in order to compile information and encourage reporting, the establishment of trust at the community level and their cooperation with the host State in order to strengthen gender-sensitive security and justice.

For example, Uruguay participates in the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo with approximately 1,000 troops, who fulfil civilian protection tasks and make use of joint protection teams to monitor and address human rights violations. Those peacekeepers collaborate with civil groups that provide support for different aspects, including the supply of water and food and medical attention. They also carry out patrols to prevent and avoid violations of the rights of women and girls in remote situations and locations.

Greater inclusion of women in peacekeeping missions is also appropriate, as they possess a greater sensitivity to these facts and significantly generate trust. Their important participation in the search for peace increases the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance, credibility in peacekeeping, economic recovery in post-conflict situations and the sustainability of peace agreements.

However, that acknowledgement of the contribution that peacekeeping missions can make when it comes to preventing and responding to situations of sexual violence also makes us think again about the seriousness of sexual violence when it is committed by the forces who make up these missions against those who they are called upon to protect. The use of sexual and gender-based violence by personnel deployed in peacekeeping missions is worrying. Given this situation, Uruguay reiterates its commitment to the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy and its willingness to continue ensuring that those who carry out acts of sexual violence be held accountable for them.

Another measure the Council can take to counter sexual violence would be to include this issue in the work carried out by the Security Council sanctions committees. Uruguay also understands that it is critical is to guarantee punishment for those who are responsible for committing this type of crime. There is a deep-rooted culture of impunity when it comes to these crimes, which means that only a few cases are brought to justice. Rape and other forms of sexual abuse in the context of armed conflict are banned by international humanitarian law and clearly violate the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols. The perpetrators thereof must be brought to justice. The Rome Statute of 1998 includes sexual violence against women and children within the category of crimes against humanity and war crimes, as well as the possibility that it could constitute a crime of genocide.

Crimes of this magnitude must not go unpunished. My country urges the Council to refer such cases to the International Criminal Court, in the framework of the Relationship Agreement between the United Nations and the International Criminal Court, which in our opinion must be strengthened and improved. So long as there is no mandatory jurisdiction to which perpetrators are subjected, these acts will continue to go unpunished and will increase under the protection afforded by impunity. We underscore the importance of renewing our commitment to fighting sexual exploitation and abuse, the trafficking in persons and the establishment of effective international legal processes. We think it is crucial to mobilize additional financial resources leading to the adoption of programmes that can respond to the needs of victims of sexual exploitation and abuse and that promote cross-cutting gender equity.

It is increasingly clear that, given the serious upheaval that these crimes create for international law and world peace, the international community must be committed to adopting measures and must identify actions for victims in favour of justice. Otherwise, the story of the development of conflicts will continue to be one of the loss of lives, attacks against civilians, destruction, and social and economic violence. But sexual violence in times of war tends to be an invisible crime. The time has come to break the silence and to bring an end to such objectionable acts, which are particularly harmful to the freedom and dignity of women and girls, who find themselves among the most vulnerable victims of armed conflicts.

Mr. Yelchenko (Ukraine): Ukraine appreciates the French initiative to hold, in advance of the commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict on 19 June, an open debate on conflict-related sexual violence. I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his information and for his introduction to the debate today. We also thank all three briefers for their excellent briefings on the subject.

We appreciate the Secretary-General's April report on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2016/361), as well as his recommendations. As the report states, the reality on the ground continues to be characterized by an alarming number of incidents of mass rape, systematic and widespread sexual violence, and impunity. The data contained in the report, in particular that relating, inter alia, to the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Somalia, are nothing short of deeply shocking and angering. By the way, a lot of additional information on sexual abuse in the Central African Republic was brought to my attention during my own recent visit to the Central African Republic as the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013) concerning the Central African Republic.

Sexual violence continues on a strikingly high level against the most vulnerable groups — children, refugees, displaced persons and minorities. In 2015 alone, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, sexual violence against children accounted for 41 per cent of the reported cases of violence. Conflict-related sexual violence has a devastating impact on societies that are already traumatized by war, in particular on people's lives, families and communities. In that regard, we would like to stress again that sexual violence is a crime under international law, under specific provisions of the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols and under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. It is a grave breach of the Geneva Conventions when sexual violence is used as a method of warfare. It is also important that, in a series of resolutions, the Council has committed to breaking the taboo around speaking up about wartime rape and to taking action to put an end to its use and to shattering the culture of impunity.

On 19 June, we will mark eight years since the adoption of resolution 1820 (2008), which condemned sexual violence, which is used as a tactic of war and constitutes a threat to global peace and security. Today, in 2016, we are facing new disturbing realities. As our Council stated in resolution 2242 (2015), acts of sexual violence have become part of the strategic objectives and ideology of certain terrorist groups and are being used as a tactic of terrorism and as an instrument to increase their power, with an impact on financing, recruitment and the destruction of communities. The aforementioned Secretary-General's report shows that this outrageous trend has only increased. The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram, Ansar Dine, the Taliban and Al-Qaida continue to practice sexual enslavement, abductions, forced marriages and forced pregnancies. They use sexual violence as part of their system of punishment and reward.

Particularly disturbing is a pattern, identified and outlined in the Secretary-General's report, linking the trafficking in persons, particularly women and girls, by terrorists with sexual violence. In situations of conflict, extremist and terrorist groups use human trafficking for sexual purposes to increase their power, revenue and recruitment base. That is why we share the opinion that it is essential to understand and counteract that terrorist strategy of using sexual violence as a tactic of terrorism.

During times of violent conflict, rape is frequently used to harm, humiliate and shame. All too often, the stigma and shame associated with sexual violence remains with the victim rather than the perpetrator. Special attention should also be given to internally displaced persons, the majority of whom are women and children. Owing to the stigma and other factors, those crimes remain significantly underreported. As the Secretary-General states in his report, for each rape reported in connection with conflict, 10 to 20 cases are likely go undocumented. Many victims suffer in silence while impunity for the perpetrators remains prevalent. We must continue to speak out about the stigma so that it moves firmly onto the shoulders of perpetrators and not the survivors. We must speak and act to protect children born out of rape. We should take actions to respond to the needs of survivors across the legal, psychological, social, medical and other vital spheres. We should build justice and security systems that can respond to and help prevent sexual violence and tackle impunity.

Sexual violence has been a feature of most conflicts. However, only recently has the international community started to openly discuss it in the discourse of conflict prevention. Unfortunately, Ukraine has also been affected by conflict as a result of Russian aggression. Among other serious consequences, we have seen an increase in sexual violence cases. In order to address that problem, the Ukrainian authorities are ready to enhance cooperation with the relevant international organizations and mechanisms, first and foremost, with the United Nations. We have noted that the latest Secretary-General's report does not contain any references to the conflict-related sexual violence in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine under the control of the Russian-backed separatists, and we strongly believe those omissions should be corrected. We would therefore like to use this opportunity to propose that the relevant special procedures, such as Ms. Bangura's work, as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, include the situation in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions in her field of activities.

Ukraine, as a country that recently adopted a national action plan on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), strongly supports the need to ensure the equal participation of women and their full involvement in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution, and their active presence within the justice and security sectors in positions such as lawyers, judges, police officers and others. We are also fully committed to contributing to the international community's and the Council's concrete, practical and effective preventive efforts and response to sexual violence in conflicts.

Mr. Ciss (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, the Senegalese delegation would like to thank the French presidency for the timely choice of the topic of today's debate, namely, responding to the threats of human trafficking and sexual exploitation in situations of armed conflict. Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, for the meetings that France has planned for the Council this month. You will have our full cooperation as you guide the Council, and we will have a busy month full of reflections and actions in the service of peace around the world, particularly in Africa.

I would also like to thank France's predecessor in the presidency, Egypt, for its outstanding presidency of the Council.

I also wish to thank the Secretary-General for his important statement, as well as our briefers today — Ms. Bangura, Ms. Giammarinaro and Ms. Davis — for their high-quality briefings and for the poignant accounts that they have shared with us, which truly confirm the full gravity of this scourge that shocks and disturbs the global conscience.

Sexual violence warrants the attention of the Security Council as a factor behind the displacement of persons, which changes the composition of communities, and as a source of financing for armed groups, in particular terrorist groups, as well as a means of humiliating enemy ethnic groups]. That is to say that this debate is most timely because, on 19 June, we will be marking the second International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict. Although, for over 10 years, the topic has been a priority of the Security Council, sexual violence in conflict is a matter of increasing concern for the international community, owing to rapes that are being perpetrated on a large scale with full impunity, unfortunately, in various theatres of conflict, including in Africa. The phenomenon is of particular concern, as indicated by the report of the Secretary-General (S/2016/361), because, for each reported case of rape in connection with a conflict, there are at least 10 others that go unreported, as they are covered up owing to fear, shame or cultural and social pressure.

As demonstrated by the report, that type of violence and its disastrous consequences continue despite efforts to combat such problems. While expressing the growing concern about human trafficking committed by non-State groups and terrorists, the report also recommends reopening the international debate on the financing of violent extremism and the fight against that scourge by taking into account the new circumstances encountered today. Moreover, it calls attention to the economic and strategic underpinnings of selling women and girls. With regard to the matter of sexual violence, in particular human trafficking, we believe that it is important that we have a comprehensive strategy that is guided by the following priorities: prevention, protection, reintegration and accountability.

Effective protection requires the appropriate means and mechanisms to provide victims with a feeling of trust and security, thereby allowing them to report the perpetrators. With regard to prevention, vigilant and quick intervention measures in connection with sexual violence must be bolstered by providing sufficient financial and human resources commensurate with the situation at hand. Furthermore, as part of mediation aimed at settling conflicts, there is a need to take into account the challenges spurred on by gender issues so as to ensure that the issue of sexual violence in conflict is fully integrated in ceasefire and peace agreements, the implementation mechanism for such agreements and, of course, the various phases of peacebuilding.

In that regard, my delegation would like to welcome the increasing presence on the ground of women's protection advisers, who are responsible for convening follow-up meetings focused on information-sharing and monitoring aimed at dealing with sexual violence in conflict and at facilitating dialogue between the parties to a conflict so as to garner commitments to protect victims. It is also crucial to invest in women's groups locally so as to combat extremism and the radicalization of youth. Accordingly, the example of the monitoring and early-warning rooms for women — the Senegalese equivalent of the women's situation room — a mechanism that has existed in Senegal since 2012 and the primary mission of which is to mobilize women and girls to play an active role in the prevention of conflicts through mediation, clearly illustrates the role played by women's groups.

At the regional level, the prevention of sexual violence should first begin with the implementation of legal provisions and international texts ratified at the level of the African Union (AU), such as resolution 283, adopted by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, on the situation of women and children in conflict. Nonetheless, it is important to note that, in addition to prevention, suppression is extremely important, in particular with regard to ensuring that perpetrators are dissuaded from committing crimes. There should also be a demonstration of the fact that no high-level official or military person is above the law and that no woman or child is without the protection of the law.

Sadly, terrorist groups have distinguished themselves in the area of human trafficking, in particular in connection to sexual exploitation in armed conflict, as the Secretary-General recalled earlier when he spoke of the tragic kidnapping of girls in Chibok by Boko Haram. My delegation remains convinced that protection and women's empowerment must be at the centre of any strategy aimed at fighting terrorism in order to respond once and for all to the issue of gender. In that regard, it is urgent to recall the great need to implement resolution 2195 (2014), on the links between terrorism and transnational organized crime, and the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. We also believe that it is imperative to collaborate with traditional religious leaders, who can play more than a minor role in implementing strategic public relations, thereby allowing us to counter and neutralize extremist and terrorist narratives.

I would like to recall that the responsibility to end sexual violence in armed conflicts falls on the shoulders of the parties to conflict, with the support of the international community. That will require a combination of measures, in particular prevention, assistance and protection. But it is also necessary to act in a proactive manner to dissuade, detect and eradicate human trafficking, especially by extremist and violent groups, as was underscored by the presidential statement on human trafficking adopted in 2015 (S/PRST/2015/25).

In conclusion, I am pleased to reaffirm Senegal's continued commitment to the fight against sexual violence. That commitment is illustrated by the sponsorship of the President of Senegal, Mr. Macky Sall, of the launching of United Nations campaign to that end, with the collaboration with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Bangura, to whom we reiterate our full support.

Mr. Zagaynov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Today's meeting provides a good opportunity for us to discuss the state of efforts to combat sexual violence in armed conflict on the basis of the most recent report of the Secretary-General (S/2016/361) on thetopic. An important role in that undertaking is played by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, in particular with regard to cooperating with the Governments of countries affected by armed conflicts.

We have carefully studied the report of the Secretary-General on sexual violence in conflict for 2015. Many of the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report dovetail with today's topic. Without any doubt, oremost on our minds today is the problem of the scope and unprecedented brutality of sexual violence by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and other terrorist armed groups and the ensuing imperative to attach particular importance to the matter of rehabilitating affected women and girls. Dealing a final blow to international terrorism and its crimes is impossible without consistently strengthening international cooperation, with the central and coordinating role to be played by the United Nations and the Security Council.

Women and children in armed conflicts most often become refugees and internally displaced persons. Moreover, they face the threat of sexual violence both in transit and in refugee centres. Of particular concern are reports — which the report of the Secretary-General also draws attention to — about the emergence of an illegal infrastructure for exploiting refugees, including through networks of illicit trafficking, commercial sexual trafficking and sexual slavery.

Various aspects of combating sexual violence in armed conflict, including issues related to human trafficking, are the focus of a number of United Nations agencies and international initiatives. As the Secretary-General has rightly noted, those phenomena are cross-border in nature. There is a need to strengthen international efforts to combat human trafficking in step with existing instruments. In that regard, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime is making a practical contribution by providing technical assistance to States.

Our country, as a member of the Group of Friends United against Human Trafficking, attaches great importance to the system-level work to combat human trafficking. Given the topical nature of the issue, especially in the light of the mass influx of refugees as a result of armed conflicts, the implementation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action against Trafficking in Human Beings has particular relevance. The Security Council should focus its activities on issues of sexual violence in situations of armed conflict, especially in situations that are on its agenda, while avoiding duplication of effort with other United Nations bodies and other international mechanisms. At the same time, the matter of combating sexual violence in armed conflict should be regarded as an integral component of a whole package of conflict-resolution measures.

Unfortunately, once again, we have to note the ongoing practice of diverging in reports from previously Council-approved terminology. Our delegation drew attention to the issue earlier. We are talking about replacing Security Council language on the matter of sexual violence in conflict with the more blurred concept of conflict-related sexual violence. That approach has also been followed in the proposed theme of this debate. That type of attempt to reopen agreed-upon provisions is a matter of concern for us, primarily because that could also bring with it broad interpretation of existing mandates, blurring the lines between the issue of the maintenance of international peace and security and general matters of combating organized crime or human rights violations.

We are convinced that the Security Council's consideration of sexual violence in conflict, just like the matter of women and peace and security as a whole, should not be used to promote documents and debates that are contentious and do not enjoy consensus among States in their concepts and approaches and focus on issues of sexual orientation and gender identity. That risks distracting attention from tasks that are directly planned for in the mandates formulated by the Security Council.

Very soon, on 19 June, we will marking the second International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict. We hope that the United Nations events, including today's debates, will serve to eradicate sexual and other types of violence with respect to civilians in armed conflict and help to find more effective ways to resolve conflicts and to maintain international peace and security.

In conclusion, I will say a few words relating to the statement of the Ukrainian delegation. In that statement, yet another attempt was made to assign blame for the disasters of Ukrainian civilians on Russia. The suffering of civilians in eastern Ukraine is the consequence of full-scale military operations begun by Kyiv in 2014 against the region, as well as the social and economic embargo against the region. Specifically, regarding the topic of today's meeting, we might note, for example, the matter of the situation of women in Ukraine and that of internally displaced persons (IDPs). Those matters, unlike the affirmations of the Ukrainian delegation, are reflected in documents of international bodies. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, for example, has many times called attention to cases of sexual and gender-based violence against such women. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine also noted the particular vulnerability of IDPs regarding human trafficking and exploitation. The list of such examples goes on.

Mr. Suárez Moreno (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to thank the delegation of Egypt for its work during its presidency of the Security Council during the month of May. We also congratulate the delegation of France on its assumption of the presidency for the current month. We reiterate our support for the success of your efforts, Sir, as President of this body. We welcome the convening of this important debate. We also thank the Secretary-General for introducing his annual report (S/2016/361) on conflict-related sexual violence. And we express our gratitude for the briefings by Ms. Bangura, Ms. Giammarinaro and Ms. Davis.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela condemns sexual violence in all its forms, in particular violence that occurs in the context of armed conflict and carried out by different actors, whether State or non-State actors. There is no justification of any kind for committing such reprehensible acts. That crime violates human dignity and leaves devastating consequences for its victims. In the majority of cases, they are stigmatized and face a series of obstacles that result from social pressure, cultural and religious patterns and the lack of specialized personnel and infrastructure at the most basic level to look after them. Furthermore, such acts are an express violation of international law, international human rights law and international humanitarian law. We cannot allow impunity when it comes to that type of crime. Our country calls for effective accountability for all forms of sexual violence. We should impose exemplary sanctions for all those who instigate or who are responsible for that kind of crime.

The vulnerability that the civilian population faces in the midst of an armed conflict is all the more alarming when we focus on women and children, and even more when they are displaced or refugees, because in many cases they end up being the victims of trafficking in persons and sexual slavery, where an important role is played by non-State groups and criminal gangs that feed off each other. The economy of war feeds on human tragedy and the most vulnerable sectors.

The existence of non-State actors accused of using sexual violence as part of their war tactic, as pointed out in the report, is a challenge for the international community when it comes to determining how to ensure the promotion of specific commitments in order to prevent the use of sexual violence by those armed groups that the Council does not describe as terrorists. In that regard, we deem it relevant to promote adequate agreements on that particular topic in scenarios where peace talks and ceasefire talks under way.

Building resilience, in particular with regard to training and increasing national institutional capacity-building linked to justice, health and social welfare systems in countries that are in armed conflict or post-conflict situations, plays a fundamental role. It is therefore necessary to combine our efforts so that, while fully respecting the sovereignty of the States concerned, we can develop and strengthen those capabilities for the proper enforcement of accountability and the rehabilitation of victims and children of such violence, so that they are guaranteed the right to preserve their identity, including, among other things, their nationality, which is a fundamental right of every human being.

With regard to the process of institutional capacity-building, we acknowledge the important work done by the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict.

We reiterate our firm condemnation of all incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse committed by any foreign force or by military, police or civilian personnel deployed in peacekeeping operations or special political missions, as well as by staff of this Organization considered not to be deployed in such operations. Hence we support the policy of zero tolerance regarding any sexual-violence incidents that have taken place or will take place in any peacekeeping operation or military mission that has a mandate or support from the Security Council.

The United Nations must be an example of consistency and firmness with respect to the importance of preventing such acts, and, above all, of accountability with respect to any staff member of the Organization or of international forces authorized by this body who has committed this type of crime.

As indicated in the report, sexual violence has reached new levels. Extremist groups and terrorists in the Middle East and Africa use it as an instrument of war and selective attacks against ethnic or religious minorities with a view to annihilating them, and, in other cases, to displace populations in order to control territory and natural resources. The main perpetrators of such actions are the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS), Jaish al-Islam, Al-Qaida, Al-Nusra, Boko Haram and all associated groups and militias in locations where they have a presence.

In this regard, we reiterate our appeal to the international community to fully respect the provisions of international law and of the resolutions adopted by the Council related to the ban on supplying arms, financial or logistical support to these groups, so that we can effectively neutralize their operational capacity and their abhorrent practices of sexual exploitation and violence.

We also agree with the statement made by the Secretary-General in his report reiterating the importance of strategically coordinating efforts to prevent sexual violence and to do so in unison with efforts to prevent violent extremism and terrorism.

We would also like to add that measures aimed at the effective prevention and eradication of the crime of trafficking in persons with a view to sexual exploitation in armed conflict requires a broad democratic discussion forum that would ensure the full participation of Member States, all United Nations entities with responsibility in this area, and various regional and subregional mechanisms, so as to coordinate and establish synergies among these actors.

Finally, we wish to express our support for the recommendation that the issue of sexual violence in armed conflict be included in the work of the sanctions committees, in particular those related to ISIS and Al-Qaida.

Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola): Mr. President, I wish to start by congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of June and for having convened this open debate on a critical issue: conflict-related sexual violence. I wish also to reiterate once again Angola's full support for your presidency this month in order to ensure that it is a successful month in the work of the Council. I should like also to commend Egypt for the remarkable work done during the month that just ended.

Let me thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his opening remarks and also thank the briefers, Ms. Bangura, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, and Ms. Giammarinaro, for the very insightful briefings presented to the Council. This is a way of reaffirming the standing commitment to the defence and protection of the victims of sexual violence and trafficking in persons.

It is totally unacceptable that, since the holding a year ago of our last open debate on conflict-related sexual violence and the consensual adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 69/293 establishing 19 June as the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict, sexual violence in conflict continues to occur extensively and the perpetrators are rewarded with impunity. As stated in most recent report of Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2016/361), during 2015 widespread violations against women and girls were documented and remain very much without any real action taken by the mechanisms that we have in the Council.

Crimes against sexual integrity, as well as systematic sexual violence and abuses in areas in Syria and Iraq controlled by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), form part of a system of punishment and reward in the terrorists' attempts to consolidate their power in the regions under their control. Moreover, sexual violence has become a driving factor in forcing the displacement of civilians, while sexual enslavement has become a central feature in the recruitment of males, local youths and foreign fighters to join the terrorist ranks. Resolution 2242 (2015), on women and peace and security, pointed out how sexual violence is a part of the strategies and ideologies of certain extremist groups aimed at increasing their power, revenue and recruitment and an instrument aimed at destroying the social fabric of the target communities.

Resolution 1820 (2008), for its part, recognizes how sexual violence became a tactic of war and a threat to global peace and security, underscoring the fact that rape and other forms of sexual violence can constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The United Nations Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, in its provisions ensuring the social protection, participation and empowerment of women in strategies to counter terrorism and violent extremism, recognizes women as a crucial driving force in achieving a sustainable peace and the interlinkages between counter-terrorism strategies and efforts to protect and empower women and girls and to combat conflict-related sexual violence.

We must regretfully note that in spite of such strong pronouncements and the international community's stand on this issue, translated into a considerable number of legally binding decisions such as Security Council resolutions, strategies and plans of action to counter terrorism and violent extremism, we are witnessing the escalation of conflict-related sexual violence, committed mainly but not exclusively by extremists and terrorist groups such as ISIL, Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram, the Taliban and Al-Qaida.

The report of the Secretary-General highlights how sexual violence has been a driver of forced displacement — from the Middle East, the sub-Saharan region and the Horn of Africa — with 950,000 new refugees and migrants fleeing to Europe in 2015 and with such massive displacement and cross-border activities leading to an increase in trafficking in persons for sexual slavery. The most distressing aspect across the entire spectrum of the situation of sexual exploitation and slavery is the physical and psychological trauma inflicted upon the victims, with fear and cultural stigma preventing the reporting of abuses.

National institutions in countries where sexual violence takes place, namely, the police and the judiciary, must enhance capacities in order to instil confidence in victims of sexual violence. I hope that, with the meeting taking place at the moment involving our police chiefs, that situation will be carefully taken into account. Strengthening national institutions is essential to ensure accountability and trials, which are critical steps in preventing and deterring potential perpetrators, building credible judicial and law-enforcement institutions and establishing the rule of law. In that regard, Angola values greatly the work of the United Nations Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict in providing assistance to Governments, including in the areas of criminal investigation and prosecution, military justice, legislative reform, protecting victims and witnesses and providing reparations for survivors.

Another area of major concern is the continuing allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations peacekeepers and non-United Nations forces acting under Security Council mandates. Of particular concern are the allegations of sexual abuse of minors in the Central African Republic and Somalia. It is indeed regrettable and paradoxical that United Nations peacekeeping mission personnel, entrusted with the main task of protecting civilians, take advantage of women, girls and boys in extremely fragile situations for such despicable human rights violations. In that connection, Angola fully supports the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy for sexual exploitation and abuse, and welcomes the continuous commitment and the strengthening of measures aimed at their protection based on the principles of transparency, accountability and impartiality. We also join the proposal presented this morning by Spain to increase the presence of women's protection advisers in the field to monitor, analyse and report on conflict-related sexual violence and to facilitate dialogue with parties to conflict on protection commitments, as an effort to enhance prevention, early warning and timely responses to conflict-related sexual violence.

In conclusion, there is still a great disparity between international human rights standards and national legislation in conflict-affected countries, which often minimizes these crimes. In that regard, Angola encourages the international community to assist Governments in fighting impunity by developing and implementing national action plans and strategies in line with international standards on combating sexual violence and trafficking in persons.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on the start of your presidency for the month of June.

(*spoke in English*)

I am very grateful that France scheduled this debate today. The women and peace and security agenda is a high priority for the United Kingdom, and I am very glad that my country is the penholder on this issue in the Security Council.

I join others in welcoming the briefings we heard from speakers this morning, which I found humbling and moving. If I may, I would like to quote the words of an earlier briefer:

> "[t]he Islamic State did not just come to kill us ... but to take us as ... merchandise to be sold in markets " (*S/PV.7585, p. 6*).

"Merchandise to be sold in markets" — those are the words of Nadia Murad Basee Taha, the Yazidi activist who addressed the Security Council in December. She ended her statement saying,

> "These crimes against women and their freedom must be brought to an end today." (*ibid, p. 7*)

That was six months ago. Sadly, as the briefers and the Secretary-General's report (S/2016/361) make clear, we are not there yet. We have not yet brought these crimes to an end. The crimes continue — in Syria, in Iraq and in places as far afield as Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In response, we cannot be deterred. Our efforts must be unrelenting and, equally, far-reaching. I look forward to working with Spain on Román's five operational points. I have my own four steps to put forward today.

Step one: we must begin by bringing order to the chaos that groups such as Da'esh and Boko Haram thrive in. Those groups do not recognize laws. They do not recognize borders. They operate with impunity, with no regard for the legitimate authorities or the human rights of those they enslave and traffic. That is why the United Kingdom is playing an active role in the coalition to defeat Da'esh and take back the land they claim to govern. It is why we are working tirelessly on Syria, as part of the Council and part of the International Syria Support Group, to forge a peaceful political solution, one that ends the crisis that has driven the growth of Da'esh. And it is why we are working so closely with other countries that face the destabilizing influence of extremists, so that their hatred cannot take hold. Slowly, our efforts to defeat Da'esh are working. They have already lost over a third of the territory they once controlled in Syria and Iraq. But that is just the first step.

Step two: we also need to ensure that militaries and security forces can prevent and respond to sexual violence, and that they are trained and equipped to do so. For instance, the United Kingdom is training Peshmerga troops in Iraq so that they can respond sensitively and appropriately to the needs of survivors of the sexual violence and trafficking of Da'esh. We recognize that this is not an issue confined to one corner of the globe. That is why we are also training African peacekeepers and soldiers, including the army in Mali. It is why we are training our own troops, as well as those from Croatia, Romania, Slovenia, Morocco and Kyrgyzstan. We all have a role to play. Our own countries' police and military need to be more representative of our societies, with greater recruitment and greater promotion of women. If the United Nations itself is to play its full role in ending the scourge of sexual violence, it cannot — it must not — be a part of the problem. No one wearing a United Nations blue helmet should ever take part, or even be associated in any way, with sexual violence, exploitation and abuse. Anyone who commits such crimes, whether a peacekeeper or a Da'esh fanatic, must face justice. Accountability cannot be selective.

That is why, for step three, the United Kingdom is building the capacity of Governments, judiciaries, police, military and civil society to strengthen the prosecution of sexual violence. We have done so in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Kosovo, Nepal, Syria and Uganda. Such efforts must lead to more investigations and more prosecutions through the International Criminal Court and through hybrid and domestic courts. There can be no impunity for the perpetrators of those crimes.

In step four, we need to challenge the harmful stigma directed towards survivors of sexual violence in conflict. Survivors and children born of rape are too often ostracized by their families and exiled from their communities. When a survivor escapes the horror of sexual violence, she should find hope and support, not rejection and silence. So together, let us all challenge any culture that accepts, condones or justifies sex.

Let me close with this final thought. If we are to succeed in ending these crimes, as the Yazidi acitivist Nadia Murad implored us to do, we will need the widest possible support from the grass roots all the way up to global organizations. To do that means working with non-governmental organizations (NGOs). They are vital partners. The United Kingdom works with such organizations as Tearfund to support survivors of sexual violence in the most remote parts of eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. They help women and girls in desperate need in places Governments struggle to reach.

Yet over the past week, over 250 NGOs have had their bids to gain accreditation with the United Nations either delayed or rejected — the majority for spurious reasons. Many of these NGOs lead the charge on human rights and on women and gender issues. Those organizations empower women, and they can empower our efforts to ensure that women and girls are no longer treated as merchandize in markets. We need to be letting them in, not shutting them out. I therefore call on the Economic and Social Council Committee on NGOs to stop these arbitrary deferrals and let these NGOs in. I hope all here will join me in that call.

Mr. Ibrahim (Malaysia): Allow me to begin by congratulating France on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of June, and by expressing my delegation's full confidence in your able stewardship, Sir. This is already evidenced on the second day of France's presidency through the convening of an open debate on conflict-related sexual violence, with a focus on the human trafficking dimensions. We commend this French initiative and the useful concept note guiding our discussions today (S/2016/496, annex).

I also wish to commend the Egyptian delegation for its successful presidency last month.

My delegation expresses its appreciation to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his remarks, and reiterates our firm support for United Nations efforts to combat sexual violence in conflict. I also wish to acknowledge the commitment, depth of expertise and testimonies shared by the panel of briefers: the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Zainab Bangura; the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, Maria Grazia Giammarinaro; and Ms. Lisa Davis in their statements.

Malaysia welcomes the adoption on 16 December 2015 of presidential statement S/PRST/2015/25, which recognized the impact of human trafficking in situations of armed conflict, particularly on vulnerable groups such as women and children. It was an important step towards mobilizing coordinated and sustained actions to address human trafficking as a threat to international peace and security. Today's open debate further reveals the alarming and pervasive link between human trafficking and the perpetration of conflict-related sexual violence. Evidently, the mass displacement of populations due to armed conflict has exacerbated the vulnerabilities of women and girls, increasing their susceptibility to being preyed upon by unscrupulous actors for sex trafficking.

We continue to witness the horrific impact of sexual violence being used not only as an abhorrent tactic of war, but also as a despicable tactic of terror by non-State armed groups, including through abductions, forced marriages, sexual slavery and the trafficking of women and girls. These horrifying trends in conflict-related sexual violence demand renewed attention and innovative responses from the international community, which we hope will be extensively explored during this discussion, to which we offer the following contribution.

This year's report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2016/361) presents further disturbing evidence of the premeditated, systematic and strategic use of sexual violence targeting women and girls by terrorists and violent extremist groups. Sexual violence against women and girls is a shockingly common reality in conflict zones. In their world of enslavement, they are used to lure and recruit combatants with the promise of wives and sex slaves to extract ransom from communities or as a means to obtain funds through sex trafficking. The blatant and outrageous exploitation of women and girls to fuel the activities of terrorist groups calls on us to expend existing strategies in counter-terrorism, including to curb the financial flows to terrorist groups arising from conflict-related sexual violence. We believe that this issue should be given greater focus at the fifth review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy this month.

While the conceptual debate around terrorism and violent extremism remains ongoing, we would be remiss to overlook the crucial role that women can and do play in the prevention and mitigation of these twin phenomena. In that regard, Malaysia welcomes the recommendations of the Secretary-General in his Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, emphasizing the protection, participation and empowerment of women as central considerations in strategies to counter terrorism and violent extremism.

In addressing cross-border crime, such as trafficking, the cooperation of regional bodies and Member States is imperative, particularly where trafficking routes span conflict zones and conflict-related sexual violence is involved. In support of such concerted action to prevent and combat human trafficking, the States members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (SEAN) signed the ASEAN Convention against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, in Kuala Lumpur in November 2015, with a view to promoting intra-regional cooperation, including in the investigation and prosecution of perpetrators, the sharing of information, and capacity-building.

My delegation is fully aware of the challenges faced in combating human trafficking, as noted by the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children. Malaysia remains committed to addressing this scourge. More importantly, we have taken and continue to take measures to improve our response, which is based on a comprehensive approach involving a wide range of partners and stakeholders. For instance, the Government of Malaysia directly supports the work of 75 non-governmental organizations working to support victims of human trafficking in the country by providing essential services such as legal, medical and logistic assistance. At the enforcement level, we maintain strong links and cooperation between ASEANAPOL and INTERPOL to disrupt, degrade and dismantle regional and international trafficking networks.

The rescue, recovery and reintegration of women, children and men affected by conflict-related sexual violence must lie at the heart of our actions. Survivors of sexual violence often suffer twice over — first from the heinous acts themselves and then from the subsequent stigman of being victims. The stigmatization can last for generations, particularly for children born to victims of sexual violence, who are sometimes unjustly abandoned or shunned by their communities. This undeserved stigmatization must be countered by promoting greater compassion, understanding and awareness from the grass roots to the highest political level. We strongly encourage the engagement of civil society, community and religious leaders in reversing negative perceptions of survivors of sexual violence, especially children born to victims of sexual violence, who have often been overlooked in reintegration efforts.

In addition, we support the provision of timely and comprehensive assistance and health-care services for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence to aid their recovery and reintegration into their communities. Furthermore, we encourage donors to channel consistent funding to reintegration programmes that empower women and girls, especially livelihood programmes and education opportunities.

As we mark the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict later this month, Malaysia joins the international community in pledging its solidarity with all the survivors and victims of sexual violence in conflict. Their dignity and determination in overcoming immense suffering provide powerful testimony and serve as a reminder for us to redouble our efforts to eradicate sexual violence in conflict. I wish to conclude by taking this opportunity to commend the tenacious work of Special Representative Bangura and her Office, as well as the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict and United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict in providing analysis and catalysing responses in this field. We assure them of our continued support for their work. I also share Ms. Bangura's concluding remarks when she says that justice may be delayed, but it will not be denied.

Mr. Taula (New Zealand): We wish you very well, Mr. President, in leading us in the Security Council this month. We also appreciate the presence and valuable inputs from the Secretary-General, Ms. Bangura, Ms. Giammarinara and Ms. Davis.

The Secretary-General's latest report (S/2016/361) and the briefers paint a deeply disturbing picture. We are horrified by the trafficking for purposes of sexual exploitation by terrorist and violent extremist groups. Those are not isolated incidents; they represent a pattern and a policy. Tragically, due to the realities of today's conflicts, many victims are beyond the reach of national and international protection mechanisms. There are nevertheless steps we can take to address the drivers of this disturbing trend, to deter and disrupt the violence that is occurring and to ensure accountability for those crimes and support for survivors.

First, we must redouble efforts to address the conditions that leave civilians vulnerable to abuse and exploitation and that allow terrorist and criminal groups to carry out these crimes with impunity. The surge in conflict-related sexual violence is often a product of protracted conflict and the collapse of protection mechanisms and national judicial frameworks. We cannot expect a significant improvement until those conflicts are resolved and the groups themselves that are responsible for the majority of the crimes have been defeated.

Secondly, we need to counter narratives that attempt to legitimise and justify those practices. The promise of a bride or sex slave is a motivating factor for many foreign terrorist fighters. We support the Secretary-General's call to mainstream efforts to combat premeditated and systematic targeting of civilians, particularly women and girls, into our strategies for preventing and countering violent extremism. We also welcome the inclusion of sexual violence in conflict as an area of focus in the latest report of the Secretary-General on the strategic threat posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

Thirdly, we need to do more at domestic, regional and international levels. Domestically, we need to ensure we have national frameworks and processes in place to prosecute nationals, including overseas. And we need to work effectively with other States to identify such individuals. In New Zealand our focus has been on criminalizing the trafficking in persons, disrupting criminal and terrorist networks and addressing related crimes, including through the tracing and confiscation of financial assets. As a party to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, New Zealand's legislation has been tightened so that our citizens and residents can be charged for those types of offenses, even they occur outside New Zealand. That acts as a deterrent and ensures that human traffickers can be held accountable.

Strong regional and global cooperation and information-sharing is vital. In the Asia-Pacific region, our active contribution to regional efforts to tackle human trafficking and people smuggling, through the Bali process, has paid particular dividends. In 2015, New Zealand led a joint period of action focused on disrupting trafficking networks in the Asia-Pacific region through a series of separate but coordinated law-enforcement operations. The initiative proved highly successful, and a second joint period of action was initiated last month.

At the international level, the Security Council has a role to play, including through the ISIL/Al-Qaida sanctions regime. As the Secretary-General has made clear, the trafficking in women and girls is a source of financing for ISIL and its affiliates, as well as a recruitment tool. Resolution 2253 (2015) sets out a range of measures for choking off all sources of financing to those groups, including the option of listing those who transfer funds derived from sexual exploitation and abuse. For that to be effective, however, Member States need to actively propose individuals and entities engaged in such activities for designation. As chair of the ISIL/Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee, New Zealand is ready to discuss how sanctions can be more effective in addressing human trafficking as an enabler of terrorist groups.

Finally, we must not lose sight over the longer term of the need to heal the scars inflicted on individuals and communities and to hold those most responsible accountable. Many crimes have been committed in recent years in Syria, Iraq, northern Nigeria and elsewhere. We have to make sure that the perpetrators of conflict-related sexual violence are brought to justice. In the meantime, it is crucial that we support efforts to collect and preserve evidence.

Survivors of this violence — women, girls, men and boys — must also receive adequate support, as others have mentioned. That is necessary both to alleviate their suffering and to enable their reintegration into communities without prejudice or stigma. Through education and engagement with community and faith-based leaders, we must shift the stigma from survivors to perpetrators. Where survivors cannot be reintegrated to their communities, resettlement can be an important protection tool. We call on all States to ensure that potential exposure to trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation is taken into account in engaging refugee protection mechanisms. As the Security Council and as the international community, we must do everything we can to stop human trafficking and end sexual violence in conflict. And we must help the victims to rebuild their lives.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of France.

I warmly thank everyone for their concrete and very useful interventions, which reflect a consensus — a unanimous will — to halt the unacceptable and revolting phenomenon of sexual violence and trafficking in women and children in conflict situations. I would like to recognize in particular the efforts of the Secretary-General and the personal engagement of his Special Representative, Ms. Zainab Bangura. She has not only met victims of conflict in the field, but has also had the strength to propose ways of combating sexual violence in situations of crisis or conflict. The insight provided in that context by the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, Ms. Giammarinaro, on the particular plight of women and girls was particularly striking. Finally, the testimony of Ms. Davis here in the Council called for intensified efforts to address the causes and consequences of the various forms of gender-based violence.

The consequences of sex trafficking in women and children in conflict have been clearly identified and recalled today. On the one hand, they destroy lives, entire families and community social ties and serve to cast out the victims and children born of rape. On the other hand, sex trafficking directly fuels terrorism, not just by increasing the financial resources of such groups but also by attracting new recruits through forced marriage promises or "sexual compensation" — abominable acts carried out by the likes of Da'esh.

Faced with those well-known tragic consequences, the causes of trafficking for sexual purposes should be better taken into account. They are based on gender inequality, which is the first stage towards commodifying the bodies of women and girls. To remedy that situation, among other things, the empowerment of women must be strengthened in the areas of education and health, where they must have access to appropriate services. That includes in particular access to abortion in cases of rape in conflict situations, including in refugee camps. It is an essential right for every woman to make her own decision, which France has made a priority. It is each Member State's responsibility to take all necessary measures to give women autonomy, political and economic power, and control of their bodies. That decision-making power and freedom of choice cannot be nuanced or relativized by culture or customs in any country or society.

The Security Council also has a collective responsibility in the fight against sex trafficking. The Council's inadequate treatment of gender issues owing to disagreements among its members hinders the improvement of the status of women in conflict. Similarly, sexual violence in conflict situations and the women and peace and security agenda are too often considered separate from the threats to international peace and security considered by the Council daily.

In reality, sexual violence is among the strategies used by terrorist groups, such as Da'esh or Boko Haram, and poses a short- and long-term threat to international peace and security. We see that in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia and elsewhere. Children born of sexual violence today may become the criminals or terrorists of tomorrow. That is why I would like to present four proposals for action by the Security Council and the Secretariat on this topic.

First, we must strengthen the protection of civilians mandates for peacekeeping operations through the establishment of specialized monitoring units, comprised of human rights experts and police and judiciary cooperation in order to better identify risks through patrols, detect the markets for women and dismantle trafficking networks. The open debate to be presided over by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of France, Jean-Marc Ayrault, on 10 June, will provide an opportunity to talk more about that possibility.

Secondly, we should better integrate the issue of human trafficking into Council discussions. Presidential statement S/PRST/2015/25 of December last year was an important step in that regard, as is the report of the Secretary-General that the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime is currently working on, which will be presented to the Council in December 2016. Further work to identify individuals and entities who, through their involvement in trafficking for sexual violence, finance terrorist groups is also necessary, including through the activities of the Sanctions Committees.

Thirdly, we need to more systematically integrate crimes with a sexual dimension into the mediation and negotiation efforts of peace or ceasefire agreements. They must be considered a breach of ceasefires, just like other atrocities.

Finally, we must strengthen the role and participation of women in strategies to combat trafficking and terrorism, particularly in the context of the tenth anniversary of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. Particular attention should be paid to combating the real and virtual markets in which women and children are traded and sold with impunity. Combating impunity in this field is a priority in and of itself, and our mobilization in that regard is essential.

Let me conclude my remarks by welcoming the Secretary-General's commitment to zero tolerance of all forms of sexual violence, including sexual abuse and exploitation. We must all serve as an example, in the context of United Nations-mandated missions and elsewhere. It is crucial that the United Nations, just like Member States, adopt concrete measures to prevent and fight against all forms of sexual violence. France has already implemented a broad spectrum of measures in that regard and has reported on them to the Security Council and the General Assembly. Our determination on that issue is unwavering.

Today's debate is crucial for identifying the challenges and solutions regarding sex trafficking. The Security Council now has the collective responsibility to implement the most effective solutions and to remain mobilized on those issues. The first commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict is to be held this month on 19 June. It will provide an opportunity to maintain the mobilization of the international community on this priority issue for France and for the United Nations.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than four minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate their texts in writing and to deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber. I would like to appeal to speakers to deliver their statements at a normal speed so that interpretation can be provided accurately.

I now give the floor to the representative of Sweden.

Mr. Skoog (Sweden): First of all, I thank you, Sir, for organizing the open debate today, which builds on the significant efforts undertaken by the Security Council over the past years, and for the very concrete suggestions, that you just put forward in your intervention.

I speak on behalf of the five Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and my own country, Sweden.

I want to thank the briefers for their briefings today, but more importantly for the work they do on this very important topic. I also want to express our strong support for the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Bangura, and her Office, including the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict. Their support to Member States in ensuring support to victims and strengthening the capacity to address conflict-related sexual violence, as well as impunity, is crucial.

In spite of our joint efforts and the outrage that we feel, the scourge of sexual violence continues, with its many different aspects and manifestations. A common denominator, however, is that no region is spared. That compels us to work together in partnership so as to forge appropriate responses.

We live in a time of extraordinary flows of migrants and refugees. People fleeing are often desperate and vulnerable, becoming easy prey for human trafficking, exploitation and abuse. That compels us to provide protection to those in need. In our countries, asylum seekers are supported in various ways, including basic financial support, health-care services and accommodation. That is not only an issue of human rights and preserving dignity, but also a way to combat the exploitation of vulnerable people.

However, we need to put our national efforts in the context of a broader agenda to build and sustain peace and achieve long-term development globally. That includes addressing the root causes of conflict, fighting poverty and building national capacity, supported by the allocation of resources that are sustainable over the long term.

To render such an approach successful, a change in perspective is needed at various levels. First, we need to devote more attention to prevention. To that end, we must shift focus from women as victims to women as agents of change; we must strengthen the linkages between women's economic empowerment, women's equal political participation and their full enjoyment of their human rights; we must transform institutions, norms and behaviour; and we must engage men and boys in achieving gender equality.

Secondly, we need a more holistic and coherent institutional approach. We need to pursue action against trafficking and conflict-related sexual violence at all levels. We need to build more dynamic partnerships with all relevant actors, including within the United Nations system, and with regional and subregional organizations. And we need to build capacity and foster national ownership and inclusive processes. In that context, we are proud to be among the top contributors to the United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict and the Team of Experts in their work to strengthen national capacities for prevention and response efforts.

We also support peace processes where women are present at the peace negotiating table and where women's organizations contribute. Non-State actors also need to be engaged in that effort. The potential of traditional and religious leaders should also be harnessed. In that context, I would like to welcome the fact that Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Bangura, and her Office are working with non-State actors to combat conflict-related sexual violence.

My third and final point is related to the preceding one. We need to find the resources and secure strong long-term commitments. The international community needs to stay generously engaged and to provide predictable, sustainable and long-term financing for peace and development efforts, including for strengthening the capacities of States to address the challenges posed by trafficking and conflict-related sexual violence. The Nordic countries provide long-term financing for peace and development in a wide variety of ways, recognizing and advocating for the role of women as agents for peace. Our Nordic Women Mediators' Network, which aims to contribute to United Nations mediation efforts, is one of many expressions of that commitment, as are our generous non-earmarked contributions to the relevant United Nations funds and programmes.

On 19 June, we will commemorate the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict for the first time. That date will mark an occasion for the international community to increase accountability, raise awareness and demonstrate its resolve to redouble efforts to address the scourge of sexual violence in conflict.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Germany.

Mr. Braun (Germany) (*spoke in French*): I offer my respects to the French presidency.

(*spoke in English*)

Let me begin by thanking you, Sir, for convening this timely debate, right at the beginning of France's presidency of the Security Council. Today's meaningful briefings have demonstrated yet again that the elimination of conflict-related sexual violence needs to be at the heart of the Council's work. Like others, I wish to thank Ms. Lisa Davis in particular for her statement and her excellent recommendations, grounded in the work of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, which works tirelessly to achieve gender equality and to combat sexual discrimination.

It is telling that crimes of sexual violence are singular in their abhorrence, even in the context of the brutal conflicts in Syria and Iraq. I am thinking of the unspeakable plight experienced, among others, by the Yazidi women and girls, many of whom have found refuge in Germany. Those women and girls have been subjected to a particularly perverse form of human trafficking that requires our fullest attention. The Council, with its unique mandate and power, has a primary role to play in dealing with this subject.

First, we have seen that the United Nations sanctions regimes can be an effective instrument in countering sexual violence. In 2015, 12 individuals across four sanctions regimes were listed for sexual violence or other human rights violations against women. Germany welcomes those efforts, but we can do even more. Gender considerations should be integrated into all sanctions regimes, for example, through the inclusion of sexual violence as a designation criterion. The strengthening of the links between counter-terrorism and women and peace and security was also one of the key recommendations of a workshop recently organized by Germany in Berlin. We will soon share with the Council the full outcome of the workshop, which was attended by key experts from Member States and civil society.

Secondly, during the high-level review of women and peace and security in October 2015, Ms. Yanar Mohammed briefed the Council on the courageous work done by women's civil society organizations in Iraq (see S/PV.7533). She described how, under the most difficult of circumstances, her organization operates shelters that function as safe houses from trafficking and sexual violence. That brings me to my point that civil society organizations can play a leading role in responding to conflict-related sexual violence, and they deserve our full support. Briefings, such as those by Ms. Mohammed or by Ms. Davis today, offer proof that civil society can contribute a critical, independent perspective to the deliberations of the Council.

Thirdly, Special Rapporteur Giammarinaro has tirelessly reminded United Nations bodies and Member States of the strong links between trafficking, migration and conflicts. The call for the mainstreaming of our response to trafficking must not go unheard. I would like to reaffirm Germany's full support for Ms. Giammarinaro's mandate and her work.

Germany also welcomes the broader efforts to mainstream the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) throughout the United Nations system. But we feel that those efforts could be better linked to other processes, most notably the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. We plan on hosting a discussion soon that will explore ways to better connect the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (General Assembly resolution 70/1) to the women and peace and security agenda.

Fourthly and finally, we urgently need to redouble our efforts against sexual violence, but we also need to translate the participation aspects of the women and peace and security agenda into reality. The language produced by the Council only infrequently includes such aspects, and where they do exist, references to participation often lack detail. In an approach that could be seen as complementary to today's discussion and to the broader debate on resolution 1325 (2000) each fall, Germany would also encourage the Security Council and Member States not only to raise the issue of women and peace and security in the dedicated open debates, but also to include the active participation of women in peace processes and in the prevention of conflicts whenever addressing specific conflicts. That participation could also be a focus in the annual debate on women and peace and security this September.

Let me conclude by reaffirming Germany's unfailing commitment to the protection of women and girls from conflict-related sexual violence. The implementation of the women and peace and security agenda is more urgent than ever and will remain one of our highest priorities.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Hungary.

Ms. Bogyay (Hungary): At the outset, I would like to thank France for providing this opportunity for us to reflect on this very disturbing, very alarming and very shocking topic. I also thank you, Sir, for the concrete actions and steps that you have proposed (see S/2016/496, annex).

Hungary naturally aligns itself with the statement to be delivered later by the observer on behalf of the European Union.

Human trafficking, or modern-day slavery, is a spreading global threat that can be found in every country. Specifically in conflict and post-conflict situations, the level of insecurity and the breakdown in family and community structures and other safety nets raise the risk of the exposure of women and girls, in particular, to all forms of violence. We are deeply troubled that the trafficking in persons, often for sexual purposes, has become a recurring feature and a by-product of armed conflict.

The Secretary-General's recent report on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2016/361) portrays a deeply disturbing picture of groups, such as Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and Boko Haram, using slavery and sexual violence as an institution, often targeting ethnic and religious minorities in order to facilitate recruitment by promising male fighters access to women, generate revenue, terrorize local communities or displace inhabitants from strategic territories. We find the growing presence of Da'esh in Libyan regions that function as popular trafficking routes across the Mediterranean particularly worrying. Hungary is of the view that a number of steps will need to be taken if we wish to fight the global threat more effectively.

First, Member States will need to play a more active, leading role in the fight against conflict-related sexual violence and human trafficking.

Secondly, effective implementation of the relevant international instruments is essential. In this context, Hungary recognizes that the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has continued to support Member States in providing technical assistance, upon request, in assisting implementation.

Thirdly, prevention and protection efforts, we believe, are urgently required. Hungary shares the view that strategies to prevent and protect women and girls in conflict from trafficking must be gender-sensitive and gender-responsive. The protection of women and girls exploited by extremist groups is particularly critical. We Member States must also make sure that those we send to protect populations are not complicit in their exploitation.

Fourthly, accountability for sexual violence and human trafficking must be ensured. We underline the strong need to bring those responsible to justice. It is just too easy to always point at the International Criminal Court as the forum where such trials should take place; we must not forget that the primary responsibility lies with States. States must step up their efforts in finding the perpetrators and bringing them to justice before their national courts. Hungary supports the inclusion of perpetrators of gross violations of women's human rights and other forms of gender-based crimes in United Nations and bilateral sanctions. In this context, we encourage broader involvement in human trafficking as a basis for listing in United Nations sanctions regimes.

Fifthly, Hungary strongly support efforts aimed at enhancing the meaningful participation of women in crisis prevention and resolution. We are confident that the effective involvement of women in every stage of peace processes is an essential tool to address the phenomenon of sexual and gender-based violence in conflict.

Hungary looks forward to the report currently being prepared by UNODC on the implementation of presidential statement S/PRST/2015/25, which will be presented to the Council in December. We are ready to participate consistently and actively in discussions on how to strengthen the United Nations response to this global threat.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Italy.

Mr. Cardi (Italy): At the outset, I would like to commend the French presidency for organizing this debate as we approach the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict. I would also like to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Zainab Bangura, Maria Grazia Giammarinaro and Lisa Davis for their briefings.

Italy aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the observer of the European Union and wishes to add the following remarks in its national capacity.

After the adoption of resolution 2253 (2015) condemning the abduction of women and children for sexual exploitation and trafficking and of presidential statement S/PRST/2015/15 in December 2015, Italy welcomes the consolidated involvement of the Council on the issue of human trafficking and looks forward to reading the Secretary-General's report on progress in better implementing existing mechanisms to counter trafficking in persons. The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, as well as the expertise of specialized agencies such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, represent a very solid basis for the upcoming report and its follow-up mechanism.

The relevance of today's debate is that it links this emerging issue with the consolidated set of resolutions on women, peace and security and sexual violence in conflict. These include resolution 1325 (2000), adopted during Namibia's Council presidency in 2000, recognizing that peace is inextricably linked with gender equality and women's leadership; resolution 1820 (2008), on sexual violence in armed conflicts, adopted during Italy's last term on the Council and with our active involvement in the negotiations to ensure that the connection between international security and sexual violence be finally recognized; and resolution 2242 (2015), promoted by Spain last December, on the gender dimensions of violent extremism.

This link is extremely relevant today. It is recent news that the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham uses social media to buy or sell sex slaves, as well as as a means of funding itself. Mass migration flows — a phenomenon that Italy has been witnessing for a long time — continue to include conflict-related sexual violence as a deliberate form of persecution to displace populations, with thousands of new refugees and migrants fleeing their homeland. Italy's response to this very complex issue is multifaceted.

First, we promote an holistic approach. To this end, we have put forward a migration compact, based on a strong, unwavering commitment to humanitarian principles — first and foremost saving lives at sea — and on concrete and achievable goals to address the root causes of migration, while at the same time disrupting the business model of traffickers.

Secondly, we strengthen the justice response by ratifying and implementing relevant instruments to combat human trafficking and protect the victims. Among them, let me mention the Palermo Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Additional Protocols, including those on the trafficking of migrants and the slave trade. In this regard, I also wish to underscore the action of relevant Italian authorities in arresting, investigating and prosecuting individuals responsible for the crime of trafficking.

Thirdly, we tailor training for peacekeeping operations. Italy hosts the Centre of Excellence for Stability Police Units in Vicenza, which since 2005 has organized training courses for specialized police units, including courses on the protection and promotion of human rights and international humanitarian law and on sexual and gender-based violence. The trained personnel— over 8,000 so far, mainly from Africa — join the formed police units to be deployed in United Nations peace missions or missions led by regional or subregional organizations.

Fourthly, we are actively engaged in international initiatives, such as the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict initiative, launched at the 2013 meeting of the Group of Seven by the United Kingdom.

Given the alarming figures on the use of sexual violence by terrorists and extremist groups, much remains to be done. I wish very briefly to make two points as food for thought.

First, we need to help victims of conflict-related sexual violence to come forward and report, because the statistics show that we have are far from being exhaustive. Practitioners in the field estimate that for each rape reported in connection with a conflict, 10 to 20 cases likely go undocumented. In this regard, programmes of economic empowerment specifically addressed to the victims should be explored.

Secondly, we need to strengthen the specific aspect of mediation in the women and peace and security agenda. We believe that this aspect has yet to be fully exploited in all its potential. In line with our strong belief that we need to mainstream mediation in all United Nations agendas, we intend to do so by working together with UN-Women.

In conclusion, these recommendations cannot be decoupled from specific efforts to protect and empower women and girls. Only empowered women can contribute more effectively to sustainable peace and security and act as a preventive force to eliminate sexual violence in conflict and related trafficking. Italy remains committed to achieving the goal of empowering women and girls.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Liechtenstein.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): The upcoming commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict give us a good opportunity to ask ourselves where we stand in our fight to eliminate such violence what tools are at our disposal. What we heard this morning from the briefers certainly makes it clear that we have a very long way to go.

Accountability is a key tool of our joint effort. International criminal justice mechanisms have significantly advanced the fight against impunity for sexual violence. In 1998, the International Criminal Tribunal (ICC) for Rwanda broke new ground when it found in the *Akaycsu* case that sexual assault constituted an act of genocide. In March this year, the International Criminal Court found Jean-Pierre Bemba criminally responsible for rape committed by his subordinates both as a war crime and as a crime against humanity, in accordance with the principle of command responsibility. These verdicts were significant steps forward in the criminalization of sexual violence. They send a clear message that there is no impunity for sexual violence as a tool of war. We commend the Prosecutor of the ICC for including charges related to sexual and gender-based crimes in many of her ongoing cases and for prioritizing these crimes, as reflected in her policy paper.

Mr. President, you have asked today to also focus on the issue of human trafficking. Presidential statement S/PRST/2015/25, adopted in December last year, underscores the importance of international law enforcement cooperation, including with respect to investigation and prosecution. The questions you have raised in your concept note (S/2016/496, annex) are a logical continuation of the first-ever presidential statement the Council has adopted on this issue. We appreciate in particular the suggestions for concrete action by the Council in the context of its country-specific work. Sanctions against individuals and entities involved in trafficking are an important policy option that should be examined carefully.

Likewise, we see much potential in monitoring financial flows generated by human trafficking, which is not only one of the most serious crimes under international law, but also one of the most lucrative organized crime models. We are working with United Nations University and other partners on these two questions, and hope that the findings of an event that we will be organizing in late June can be incorporated into the Secretary-General's report for the follow-up discussion in the Council in December. We should enable the Council to take concrete next steps in the fight against trafficking and modern slavery.

Tens of millions of people around the globe live in conditions that qualify as modern slavery. This crime takes on various forms, including sexual enslavement, almost invariably involving women and girls. But in spite of the *jus cogens* prohibition against slavery — one of the most norms under international law — there is very widespread impunity for this crime, which is committed as a part of the conduct of war, as well as of organized crime. Tackling this culture of impunity is but one element of the effort to eliminate modern slavery, but an element that is urgently needed. Investigations and prosecutions can be complex, as the relevant acts are often committed in several jurisdictions. And where national jurisdictions fail to play their role, international criminal justice has to step in.

Under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), enslavement can constitute a crime against humanity and sexual slavery a war crime. The ICC could therefore play a catalytic role in prosecuting these crimes, while illustrating the truly global nature of its work. This great potential will be further explored at a side event on the topic of modern slavery and the role of international criminal justice, which we will host on 10 June in the presence of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court. I hope to see many participants in this meeting at that event.

In conclusion, the Council's effort to tackle human trafficking and modern slavery in situations of armed conflict must be closely connected to our broader efforts in this regard, as these crimes are committed on a very large scale as part of transnational organized crime and, in most cases, not related to armed conflict. Various factors such as poverty, displacement, and discrimination on ethnic and other grounds make a large number of individuals vulnerable to a crime that was among the first to be outlawed under international law. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (ge resolution 70/1) gives the necessary prominence to this topic and therefore offers an opportunity to finally eliminate this atrocity, in times of armed conflict and otherwise.

The President (*spoke in French*): I call on the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Vrailas: I am speaking on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

I thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon; Zainab Bangura, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict; Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children; and Lisa Davis, of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security for their briefings.

We welcome the report submitted by the Secretary-General in April on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2016/361) and presidential statement S/PRST/2015/25, adopted in December 2015. We look forward to the Secretary-General's report on progress to implement better existing mechanisms countering trafficking in persons. We commend the work of Special Representative Bangura and of the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, as well as of United Nations Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict.

As the Secretary-General's most recent report on conflict-related sexual violence states, the scope of sexual violence remains at alarming level, including recent trends such as trafficking and its close linkages to broader peace and security. Trafficking is gender-specific. The most recent EU data show that trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation is still the most widespread form of trafficking and targets predominantly women and girls. This type of trafficking constitutes a structural form of violence against women and girls and is both a demand- and profit-driven crime. From the sexual exploitation of women and girls to other forms of trafficking, such as forced marriages and many other despicable forms of exploitation, violence against women and gender inequality remain at the core of the problem.

There has been a worryingly sharp increase in the number of victims of trafficking. We as the international community must spare no effort to combat the heinous crimes that armed and terrorist groups impose on populations, including women and girls. The grim truth is that some individuals and groups choose to treat women and girls as commodities to be owned, traded, gifted and trafficked. Due to demand, human beings become resources to be exploited and their human rights denied. The cynical political economy of war dictates that when human life is monetized, significant resources can be raised to promote violent and destructive causes. It is well known that the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) uses sexual violence systematically to mobilize resources and fund its operations, including the ransoming and sale of women and girls through human trafficking and slave markets. In that context it is particularly worrisome that ISIL is expanding its presence in Libyan areas that in previous years functioned as major human trafficking routes.

But unfortunately, in addition to ISIL there are other terrorist groups, such as Boko Haram, that practise human trafficking. As the Secretary-General's report makes clear, it is a global threat that can be found in many conflict areas, including Syria, Somalia, Yemen, the Sahel, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and as such needs to be responded to at the international and national levels. The interlinkages between trafficking in persons and conflict-related sexual violence, including by violent extremist groups, need to be understood better and combatted with improved understanding of the root causes, motivations of perpetrators, and consequences of their actions on civilian populations. In this regard, we emphasize the following points:

First, we must strengthen the preventive dimension at the global, regional and national levels. In the last few years, the importance of mainstreaming the gender dimension and of understanding the essential role of women in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism has become evident. We need to strengthen our comprehensive policies and strategies empowering the role of women in society as a whole and better understand their specific needs and role in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism. Government policies need to be complemented by actions at the community level, including through partnerships with civil-society groups focused on women's empowerment and raising awareness of their role in fighting terrorism and violent extremism.

The Internet and new technologies enable organized-crime groups to access a large pool of potential victims, hide their activities and carry out a wide range of criminal acts in a shorter period of time and on a much larger scale than ever before. Measures need to be taken in order to prevent and address the use of new technologies as a tool for recruiting victims of trafficking in human beings, including in conflict areas and by terrorist groups. In this context, studies should also be done on how social media are being used to traffic women and girls into non-State armed groups and to recruit male fighters by promising access to trafficked women.

Secondly, we should strengthen the humanitarian dimension. The protection of civilians, in particular vulnerable groups, including pregnant women, children, persons with disabilities and persons belonging to minorities, is central to all of our policies. Women and girls often suffer disproportionally in situations of conflict and become deliberate targets for terrorist groups. Women and girls belonging to minorities are particularly at risk, and sexual violence is often used strategically to instil fear into, destabilize and displace entire communities. Greater attention must be given to their specific situation, including through humanitarian assistance.

There is an urgent need to adopt a survivor-centred approach to sexual and gender-based violence in humanitarian aid policies and practices. Assistance should be comprehensive, including medical care, psychological support and referral to legal services and socioeconomic assistance. Moreover, awareness-raising strategies must be pursued to fight stigmatization of the survivors and of children born as a result of sexual violence, so as to challenge negative perceptions and misunderstandings that cause further suffering and inhibit the ability of survivors to rebuild their lives.

Thirdly, we must strengthen the justice response.

First and foremost, we need to renew and invigorate our collective effort to implement domestically the existing legal architecture for combating trafficking in persons, in particular the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and make use of the expertise and practical tools of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in this regard.

We also need to make full use of the mechanisms and tools created by the Security Council to combat and prevent conflict-related sexual violence, including by strengthening the implementation of the sanctions regimes, in particular by ensuring that involvement in human trafficking is more widely used as a basis for listing where appropriate. We therefore welcome the fact that the Council, in particular in its resolution 2253 (2015), introduces terrorist listing criteria related to sexual and gender-based violence.

Deterring the financing of terrorism by all means possible, in particular through revenue from trafficking in persons, specifically in conflict, should remain a key priority in our justice response. More than ever, there is a need to end impunity for sexual and gender-based crimes. The lack of accountability in conflict areas contributes to an increase in such appalling crimes and causes further distress to survivors.

We emphasize the significant advancement in international justice made by the International Criminal Court (ICC) as well as by the non-permanent International Criminal Tribunals in combating sexual violence in conflict. We underline the need for the rapid and effective investigation and documentation of such crimes. In this respect, we commend the Office of the Prosecutor of the ICC for issuing a policy paper on sexual and gender-based crimes in June 2014 and for establishing a priority in investigating such crimes in conflict areas. We also note the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia's work to capture lessons learned on prosecuting sexual and gender-based violence crimes. Nevertheless, we bear in mind that the ICC jurisdiction is complementary to that of States and that the primary responsibility for bringing perpetrators to justice resides with States. At the national level, accountability and transitional justice mechanisms are also a key to this end.

In addition, as transnational illicit networks trafficking in people, drugs and money have embedded themselves in many conflicts, feeding on them and fuelling them with funds and weapons, we find it important that peacekeeping operations be enabled to address these issues effectively. In this regard, the United Nations police component is a critical tool in assisting host-State police and other law-enforcement agencies in addressing serious and organized crime and protecting civilians.

The EU has built a gender-specific, comprehensive legal and policy framework to combat trafficking in human beings through the EU anti-trafficking Directive and the EU Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings. Anti-trafficking actions also form a key part of our external policies.

The European Commission has recently published a study on the gender dimension of trafficking in human beings that identifies the harms of trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation and the most effective ways to reduce such harm after the fact.

The study concludes that trafficking for sexual exploitation is a particularly gendered, severe and sustained form of violence against women with physical, reproductive and mental-health impacts and secondary victimization harms. There is a need to provide specialist services that are gender-specific and access to mainstream services, such as health services, in order to address the particular needs stemming from these gendered forms of trafficking.

Reflecting the EU's comprehensive approach, anti-trafficking projects are funded under a number of EU financial instruments. These include projects addressing gender exploitation and promoting the human rights of all women and girls. The EU will continue to develop partnerships to address trafficking in human beings worldwide. Accountability and a collective effort are needed to put an end to this heinous crime.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Georgia.

Mr. Imnadze (Georgia): Georgia aligns itself with the statement just made by the observer of the European Union. I should like to make some additional comments in my national capacity, but at the outset let me first thank the French presidency for having organized this important debate and also thank Ms. Bangura, Ms. Giammarinaro and Ms. Davis for their statements earlier this morning.

Sexual violence in conflict is one of the most serious human rights violations that we deem to be a threat to peace and security. Effectively combating violence against women and girls and protecting women's rights and fundamental freedoms has become a key issue in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Much has been done at the global level in order to increase the protection of women in conflicts. In October 2000, the Security Council adopted landmark resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security. It plays a crucial role in our joint efforts, together with the follow-up resolutions addressing the same topic, including resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), and the most recent one, resolution 2242 (2015).

Although resolution 2242 (2015) does not explicitly talk about the trafficking of women and girls, it does acknowledge that acts of sexual and gender-based violence are part of the strategic objectives and ideology of terrorist groups, used as a tactic of terrorism and as an instrument to increase their power.

We welcome the recent report by the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2016/361) as well as the statement by the President of the Security Council of December 2015 on human trafficking (S/PRST/2015/25), which identifies the link with sexual violence and stresses the need to deter, detect and disrupt trafficking in persons, in particular by violent extremist groups. We look forward to the Secretary-General's report on progress in better implementing existing mechanisms to counter trafficking in persons.

The Government of Georgia spares no effort to develop and implement higher standards for the full protection of women's rights. We fully recognize the benefits of enhancing women's leadership and participation in decision-making in conflict-resolution, prevention and management processes. As an illustration of our strong commitment, in 2012 Georgia adopted its national action plan on women and peace and security for the period 2012-2015 and became one of the first countries to have a separate policy document on that important topic.

Gender-specific violence is part of the bigger picture related to conflict and insecurity. In that regard, let me draw the Council's attention to the human rights and humanitarian situation in the occupied territories of Georgia, which represent black holes where no international monitoring mechanisms are allowed to operate or have access to. Unfortunately, protecting women's rights continues to be a serious challenge as well. Women in the occupied territories continue to suffer from grave violations of their fundamental rights and freedoms, such as the freedom of movement and the right to education and other civil, social, economic and cultural rights.

Worldwide, including the Middle East and West Africa, conflict and post-conflict situations often provide favourable conditions for human trafficking and sexual violence. In order to prevent sexual violence against women, special attention needs to be paid to prevention. Georgia shares the view that, as stated in the global study on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000),

> "[e]ffective conflict prevention must therefore start from an understanding of the broad and deep insecurities that permeate women's lives prior to conflict, and the ways that pre-conflict structural inequality can facilitate violence and insecurity."

With the aim of raising awareness among peacekeepers, the Ministry of Defense of Georgia has included gender-related issues and United Nations resolutions in special training courses for peacekeeping predeployment. The topics cover violence against women, prevention and protection in operations, a gender perspective in reconnaissance and peace operations and general fulfilment and consideration of the relevant Security Council resolutions.

In conclusion, let me reiterate our commitment to further contribute to our joint international efforts to prevent and combat conflict-related sexual violence and human trafficking.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Australia.

Ms. Bird (Australia): It is distressing that, in the twenty-first century, the scourge of human trafficking and slavery not only remains one of the gravest dangers facing women and girls in conflict zones around the world, but that it is on the rise. As highlighted in the Secretary-General's report (S/2016/361), a key driver behind that horrifying trend is the increase in extremist movements and their use of both trafficking and sexual violence as a tactic of terrorism in locations such as Syria, Iraq and Nigeria. For that reason, Australia welcomes the focus on gender equality in the United Nations Plan of Action on Preventing Violent Extremism. We urge the Security Council and Member States to take practical steps to implement the Plan and to counter the use of sexual violence as a tactic of terrorism.

The Secretary-General's report provides useful recommendations on how that can be achieved. Australia fully supports efforts by the United Nations and the international community to engage with all parties to armed conflict with a view to securing concrete commitments aimed at addressing conflict-related sexual violence. We also see a need to improve the Council's early-warning and prevention capacity on conflict-related sexual violence in its monitoring of conflict situations.

Recent incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers undermine the very fabric of the United Nations peacekeeping system. Together with Member States, the United Nations must continue to implement comprehensive reforms to prevent them.

Ending violence against women is a priority of the Australian Government. It is part of our foreign policy and aid programme. Tackling human trafficking and slavery is an important means of ending violence against women. Central to Australia's efforts is our international strategy to combat human trafficking and slavery, launched in March. Under the strategy, Australia is working with partners in the Asia-Pacific region to strengthen justice responses to human trafficking and slavery. Our approach focuses on four pillars, namely, prevention and deterrence, detection and investigation, prosecution and compliance and victim support and protection.

In formulating a concerted global response to the growing menace of human trafficking in situations of conflict, we must ensure that the voices of the survivors themselves are heard.

In conclusion, let me thank you, Mr. President, for convening this debate. Let me also thank Special Representative Bangura for her tireless efforts. We welcome the opportunity provided by this debate for all Member States to reaffirm their commitment to the elimination of sexual violence in conflict.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Colombia.

Ms. Mejía Vélez (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I congratulate your country, Sir, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council and for convening this open debate on sexual violence in conflict — as needed as it is, as we have heard. I also welcome Special Representative Zainab Bangura and express my gratitude for the valuable report (S/2016/361) of the Secretary-General, which gives us a very good basis for strengthening our efforts against that scourge. I am also grateful for the briefings by the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in human beings, Ms. Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, and by Lisa Davis of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security.

The interventions we have heard, along with your concept note (S/2016/496, annex), Sir, and the conclusions of the report presented by Ms. Bangura, attest to the challenges we face in eradicating trafficking in persons in armed conflict, which, as we have seen, disproportionately affect women and children. The increasing links between this crime and phenomena such as violent extremism and terrorism forces us to redouble our efforts to ensure that no more women and children fall victim to such crimes.

The three reports issued last year on the review of the peacebuilding architecture (see S/2015/490), the review of peacekeeping operations (see S/2015/446) and the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, all emphasize the need to place greater focus on prevention in order to address threats to international peace and security. Sexual violence is not the exception. In that regard, I want to underscore that all efforts we adopt to combat terrorism and violent extremism, along with the links to human trafficking, must include a central element of prevention centred on generating better conditions for the empowerment of women and a greater commitment to ensure their rights.

We condemn all forms of sexual violence in conflict. We join in the calls from all the members of the Security Council and other countries that have spoken here about zero tolerance.

We agree with you, Mr President, that efforts aimed at responding effectively should include the participation of civil society organizations, especially women's groups working at the local level in conflict areas. As Ms. Davis and her group have said, supporting such organizations in their work and involving them in efforts to provide adequate care for victims and increase women's participation in peace negotiations should be part of any strategy at the national, regional and international levels.

All of us must contribute to this fight. In Colombia's own context of a long-standing internal conflict, to which we hope soon to find a political solution with the support of the Council and the international community, I would stress that the national Government has in place an inter-agency strategy against trafficking in persons that, in addition to prevention, includes among its objectives supporting investigations, trials and sentencing with regard to groups that commit this crime, as well as to protect and assist victims.

Allow me to turn to the paragraphs relating to Colombia in the report of the Secretary-General and to highlight the acknowledgements about the progress in my country's peace process and on women's participation in that process and the unique nature of the gender commission established to ensure that the views and concerns of women are reflected in the final peace agreement and its implementation. I should also like to point to the references to the normative measures adopted by armed and police forces, and the process of care and compensation to victims, particularly victims of sexual violence. We dearly hope that recent measures, represented by the very significant agreement reached on May 15 for the departure of children from the camps of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, will also also be a step forward in our efforts to build a solid and lasting peace and move towards reconciliation.

We recognize the enormous challenges that lie ahead, and thank Special Representative Bangura for her tireless resolve to support our efforts to promote the eradication of conflict-related sexual violence. We thank the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict for its support. We know that international cooperation is key to finding solutions, and my country is therefore proud to have had the opportunity to contribute to the work of the Team, providing our contribution through the National Institute of Legal Medicine by sharing with other countries the experience and best practices developed by Colombia in the use of forensic analysis to advance the fight against impunity.

As highlighted in the concept note before us (S/2016/496, annex), this debate is taking place within the framework of the first commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual

Violence in Conflict, to be held on 19 June. For Colombia, we will complement that commemoration with our own celebration of the National Day for the Dignity of Women Victims of Sexual Violence in the Armed Conflict next 25 May. For us, this Day will be an opportunity for the entire country to praise the dignity of the surviving victims and highlight the need to strengthen actions to care and rehabilitate them.

The Security Council can count on Colombia to ensure that the contributions and proposals arising from this timely debate will be reflected in concrete actions of prevention and protection.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Luxembourg.

Ms. Lucas (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to thank the French presidency for organizing this important open debate and all those who have provided us with their insights and testimony.

Luxembourg associates itself with the statement of the European Union.

While we will commemorate on 19 June the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict, the situation on the ground unfortunately continues to be out of step with the resolve repeatedly expressed by the international community to end this scourge.

As for the situation of children in armed conflict, the vast majority of parties listed in the annexes of the Secretary-General's annual reports are non-State actors, extremist groups and terrorists such as Da'esh or Boko Haram. However, States too are known to use this type of violence. Thus, the Syrian regime's resort to sexual violence in detention centres and interrogations — including against men and boys — is part of an arsenal of terror that contributes to massive displacements of people, which make the situation of already vulnerable groups even more precarious.

In recent years, the horror has reached new climaxes with the implementation of a veritable regulated political war economy, in which trafficking in persons for sexual purposes plays a central role. Sexual violence — which serves as remuneration for fighters, a way to sustain the group and a source of income — is part of the system whereby Da'esh remains in power in the territories it occupies. This highlights the importance of the Security Council's decision in resolution 2253 (2015) to include on the sanctions list anyone who transfers funds to Da'esh in the context of sexual exploitation, trafficking or trade.

As you rightly note in your concept note (S/2016/496, annex), Mr. President, beyond the obvious physical and psychological trauma, sexual violence poses significant risks of the socioeconomic marginalization of victims and can perpetuate the vicious circle of conflict. Children born of rape, who are often not registered at birth, are at increased risk of being radicalized in their turn and recruited by armed groups. Birth registration is the most effective mechanism for determining the age and preventing the recruitment of minors. That is why resolution 2143 (2014) on children and armed conflict, adopted on 7 March 2014 under the Luxembourg presidency of the Security Council, stresses the importance of recording all births, even belatedly.

We fully support the recommendations of the Secretary-General in his report (S/2016/361), including its call for on Security Council to add sexual violence as a criterion for designation for all relevant sanctions committees, and on the sanctions committees to systematically register alleged perpetrators of sexual violence on their lists. Moreover, the Council should see to it that the alleged perpetrators of systematic sexual violence, or those who sponsor them, are brought to justice, for example by referring situations in which such acts are committed to the International Criminal Court.

We also support the call of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Bangura, on the Security Council this morning to provide her with the resources necessary to provide a comprehensive and multidimensional response to the challenges, old and new, posed by conflict-related sexual violence. I take this opportunity to reiterate our ongoing support for the Special Representative's outstanding work and for her Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict.

Denial and impunity are the two major obstacles in the fight against sexual violence in conflict. To deny that sexual violence has an impact on security and peace is to grant impunity to the perpetrators. We will denounce this double injustice on 19 June and every 19 June until the reality on the ground finally reflects the aspirations of the international community.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Kazakhstan.

Mr. Abdrakhmanov (Kazakhstan): Kazakhstan commends the French presidency for convening this open debate and will resolutely join the United Nations system, other Member States and numerous partners to prevent and combat human trafficking in situations of conflict-related sexual violence. We thank the Secretary-General and the briefers Ms. Zainab Bangura and Ms. Lisa Davis. My special thanks go to Ms. Maria Giammarinaro, with whom I had the privilege to serve at the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. We thank all speakers for highlighting human trafficking as an unconscionable violence against human dignity and a threat to stability and the prospects for reconciliation and peacebuilding. My delegation would therefore like to propose the following recommendations.

Today, conflict-related sexual violence must be fully addressed in all its dimensions as it is linked, directly or indirectly, to the following factors: first, the nature of conflict; secondly, the profile of the perpetrators, including combatants, traffickers, terrorists and violent extremists; thirdly, the victims, including those from ethnic and religious minorities in Africa and the Middle East; and fourthly, a climate of impunity or State collapse, cross-border dimensions and/or violations of the terms of a ceasefire agreement.

The escalation of human trafficking for sexual purposes has reached alarmingly unprecedented proportions and requires cross-national interventions. All efforts of the United Nations will require coordination with the African Union, the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, the Caribbean Community and subregional structures, whose effort and commitment we also applaud. We support the African Union's momentous commitment to women's empowerment and development to fulfil Africa's Agenda 2063. Kazakhstan is ready to contribute to those efforts.

The State has the primary responsibility by enacting legislation in response to trafficking in persons and strengthening the criminal justice system. This calls for the full implementation of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and all relevant Security Council resolutions, including 1325 (2000) and subsequent ones.

The criminal codes of countries should also be updated and national legislative responses around the world harmonized and made compatible for cross-regional action. Human trafficking should be criminalized in all countries with severe and consistent punishments and an end should be put to all impunity, accompanied by the training of law enforcement and criminal justice officers. Inspired by the strong commitment of France, the current President of the Council, we have joined the code of conduct for mass atrocities of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group and call on all to abide by international principles of the rule of law and human rights.

Resolutions 2170 (2014) and 2253 (2015), which make it illegal to donate money to terrorist groups, trade in oil and antiquities and make ransom payments, should be implemented in full and by all Member States. States need to work with sanctions committees and also freeze the assets and finances of organized networks by working in close cooperation with INTERPOL, parliamentary groups, non-governmental organizations and others. Kazakhstan believes that some recommendations of the high-level review of the united nations sanctions (S/2015/432, annex) adopted in June 2015 could serve to improve the impact of sanctions against individuals and entities involved in trafficking for the purposes of sexual violence.

We also fully support the United Nations zero-tolerance policy on all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse and strongly believe that preventing sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers should be an absolute priority. All peacekeeping missions need to have women's protection as fundamental elements to their mandates with greater employment of women military and police officers, with full training prior to deployment. A gender focus must also be intrinsic to human rights, the rule of law, transitional justice and security sector reform units in multidimensional operations. Kazakhstan is presently contributing to the process by fielding its highly qualified military observers with gender competence to the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara and the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire. We hope to expand that deployment in the future. Women should be fully engaged in processes of conflict prevention, resolution and social reconstruction, even at the highest levels of peace agreements.

Sexual violence affects every aspect of a survivor's life, both as a child and an adult. The victims of human trafficking and sexual violence should receive full, competent and speedy attention with increased access to health care, psychological support, legal assistance and socioeconomic reintegration. Often the entire community also needs healing. Women with disabilities face heightened vulnerability to sexual violence and exploitation, owing as much to isolation, the lack of support, physical immobility or infirmity. In recognition of the risk faced by women maimed or wounded by anti-personnel landmines, special services will need to be mobilized for them as well.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that Kazakhstan shares the conviction of other Member States that the dignity of and respect for women must be upheld in times of conflict.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Estonia.

Ms. Lind (Estonia) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the French presidency for having organized today's open debate.

(*spoke in English*)

Estonia welcomes the report submitted in April by the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2016/361) and commends the work of the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, as well as the efforts of the United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict.

With heavy hearts, we read the Secretary-General's latest report. Sexual violence in conflict is a continuing concern and the drastic increase in the number of victims of trafficking is striking. As a European Union (EU) member State, Estonia fully aligns itself with the statement delivered here today by the Deputy Head of the EU delegation. Given the cross-border dynamics of human trafficking and an evolving criminal infrastructure designed to exploit refugees, it is critical to have good regional and subregional cooperation. We support closer collaboration between countries and organizations on this matter.

The global context of peace and security is changing and the international community is facing new challenges. Therefore, let me briefly touch upon two aspects to effectively tackle conflict-related sexual violence and the growing trend of trafficking in persons.

First, we need to keep on promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in order to address the root causes of conflict-related sexual violence. It is important to raise awareness and end the prevalence of stereotypical attitudes, social norms and practices that support and reproduce discrimination and violence against women. Estonia has included the protection of women in national strategies on conflict prevention and last year adopted its second national action plan for years 2015-2019 to implement resolution 1325 (2000).

Secondly, there must be no room for impunity for sexual and gender-based crimes. Perpetrators must be held accountable. In this regard, Estonia reiterates the important role of the International Criminal Court in situations where States are unable or unwilling to bring perpetrators to justice domestically. However, if perpetrators are to be held accountable, it is important that those who have suffered from conflict-related sexual violence report such violence and not be held back by fear and stigma. This once more emphasizes the importance of awareness-raising and changing social norms.

It is of utmost importance to continue to recognize and address the nexus between trafficking in persons and conflict-related sexual violence. Too many individuals, families and communities have been affected and devastated. Preventing and responding to sexual violence is vital to resolving conflicts, enabling development and building sustainable peace. The international community has to work together to respond to the urgency of this issue and Estonia is ready to actively engage in those efforts.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Ireland.

Mr. Donoghue (Ireland): I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak at this very timely debate and I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening it.

I also align myself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union earlier and I offer the following remarks in a national capacity.

Eight years after the adoption of resolution 1820 (2008), which recognized conflict-related sexual violence as a war crime and a crime against humanity, we continue to find ourselves in a deeply troubling situation.

The use of sexual violence as a tool of war and terror continues unabated in many conflicts and an increase in human trafficking, including the trafficking of women and girls for the purposes of sexual exploitation, has emerged as an alarming trend. Last December, the Council heard harrowing accounts of how the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, Da'esh, the Lord's Resistance Army and Boko Haram, among others, are deliberately employing tactics of human trafficking and sexual abuse in conflict contexts. Today, we heard distressing evidence from Special Representative of the Secretary-General Bangura underlining the scale and gravity of the issue. This is despite the availability of a range of instruments to address this problem. Chief among them is the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

Resolution 2242 (2015) and resolution 1325 (2000), along with other important documents, such as the Council's December 2015 presidential statement S/PRST/2015/25 on human trafficking, have established a strong normative framework and provide a basis on which to tackle the contexts in which trafficking takes place. Norms are of little use without action. We must focus on action. Taking an optimistic view, we are beginning to see some positive results on the ground. For example, Colombia not only ensured the active participation of women around the peace table, but it is also taking steps to secure the participation of women in the political, social and security dimensions of its impending peace agreement. Just two months ago, we heard in New York from civil society representatives from Kenya and Indonesia, who related their experiences of the role of women in preventing violent extremism.

As we speak, Ireland is hosting in Dublin the first workshop of gender advisers from the United Nations and regional organizations engaged in peacekeeping operations. The purpose is to enable the advisers to share lessons from the field and to consider next steps for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) on a regionally coherent basis. However, for every positive example, we have many more examples of the worst forms of sexual violence going unchecked, unaccounted for and unpunished. We need more action and we need more justice, especially when it comes to human trafficking.

We have seen from discussions in the Chamber that cases of human trafficking in the context of conflict-related sexual violence proliferate in the absence of the rule of law. The buying and selling of human beings, of women and young girls, cannot be treated just like any other crime. It is one that sees the victim continue to be victimized long after the initial offence is committed. Too often, we have seen that women who have been rescued from trafficking continue to be devalued, stigmatized and ostracized by their own communities.

There are no easy answers here, but simple justice must prevail. There is no excuse for not investigating and prosecuting cases of trafficking. If an individual State cannot or will not do so, then we must ensure that the international community is in a position to pursue justice through all available means, including international criminal law, sanctions and cross-border legal and law enforcement cooperation. However, a drive to meet the psychological and physical needs of victims, who are mostly women and girls, must play a central role in any such actions. If victims cannot meet their basic needs for shelter, food and protection, the pursuit of justice and accountability rings hollow and cannot succeed.

In September, all of us will participate in the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on mass movements of refugees and migrants. It will offer Member States an opportunity to declare how they are responding and how they will respond to the scourge of human trafficking, which so often takes place under the cover of such large-scale movements. In preparing that meeting as a co-facilitator, Ireland will do whatever it can to ensure that the questions of justice and protection for the victims of human trafficking are fully addressed, including in the outcome document for the meeting.

Finally, we can see that the scourge of trafficking cannot be eliminated unless we step up broader efforts on conflict prevention and conflict resolution. Ireland sees the three major reviews from last year as an avenue through which the United Nations can be brought closer to fulfilling its mandates. The very reason we sit in the Chamber is that we seek to end wars, to prevent their recurrence and to mitigate their consequences. Even if we fall short in those respects, it is vital that we do everything we can to protect the most vulnerable people caught in the midst of conflicts.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Lithuania.

Ms. Murmokaitė (Lithuania): I thank the French presidency for convening this open debate. I also thank the briefers for their critical contributions and testimonies.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union.

Primitive yet effective, the use of rape as a tool of war is raging in the twenty-first century. Women and girls sold as cattle in slave markets are beaten, killed or burned to death simply for resisting their abusers. Children born of rape, hated and shunned by their own peers, are living reminders to their mothers of the horrific ordeal they have been through. Men and boys are sexually abused to break them down and to humiliate their communities. As crises rage, human traffickers are expanding their hunting grounds, preying upon the displaced, the refugees and the most vulnerable.

Yet, according to all statistics, sexual crimes are rarely reported, be it for fear of stigmatization or rejection, insecurity, especially if the rapists hold positions of power, or simply because there is no one around to report to. Even in the Council, addressing rape as a tool of war can be difficult. Suffice it to remember the case of Tabith in the Sudan, where some delegations, instead of putting women's safety and dignity first, chose to doubt that abuse took place at all.

We cannot allow indifference to set in, because indifference is the mother of impunity. Even the best of tools at our disposal will not work if women continue to be bystanders of peace negotiations, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction. Making a difference requires the full integration and mainstreaming of the gender perspective into the work of the Council and the United Nations, with coherent, consistent and credible actions at all levels. Inter alia, a gender perspective is also key to all efforts to counter terrorism and violent extremist. We are on the right track, but the road ahead remains much longer than the one we have covered.

With regard to human trafficking, it does not take place in isolation. The same routes, the same criminal networks and the same ploys are used by the traffickers, be it for arms, drugs or human beings. To curb human trafficking, comprehensive efforts are required to tackle cross-border crime and terrorist networks, including through enhanced regional and subregional cooperation.

Presidential statement S/PRST/2015/25 spells out a whole range of measures aimed at tackling human trafficking, but as our Irish colleague has said, norms are useless without actions. Therefore, I believe that the Council, instead of iterating what needs to be done, should look more deeply into what is being done, how it is being done, whether it works, whether it does not work on the ground and how to make it work. Such an implementation-focused, impact-oriented debate would have specific added value.

Victims cannot wait a lifetime to obtain justice. As noted in the Secretary-General's report (S/2015/361), individual countries are taking steps to pursue accountability — small ones compared to the scope of the problem, yet important steps and a good start. We appreciate the work done by the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, which continues to assist countries in strengthening their capacity to address conflict-related sexual violence and to ensure the protection of victims and witnesses.

However, most conflict-affected countries, as many have said, lack the adequate national capacity and expertise to prevent, investigate and prosecute sexual violence and human trafficking. Where actions at the national level are not yet possible, international justice mechanisms, including the International Criminal Court, should step in. The historic trial of Bosco Ntaganda and the Court's judgment issued in the case of Jean-Pierre Bemba are encouraging signs for accountability.

We call on the Council to make better use of its sanctions tools to seek accountability as well. Even though rape is included in the listing criteria of many sanctions regimes, the actual listings on that basis are few and far between. The lengthy procedure of sanctioning the Lord's Resistance Army, for example, which is on Secretary-General's list, is just one of the many reminders that a more vigorous approach is needed. Listing criteria should also be further refined to include human trafficking for sexual enslavement.

Because of the very nature of sexual abuse, speaking out is especially difficult, even in societies where women are fully empowered. It is hard to imagine doing so in situations of conflict and serial discrimination of women and girls. But some do, such as Nadia Murad, a Yazidi survivor of sexual enslavement. Her courage and fortitude should be an example for many victims seeking to break out of the stigma and shame. To help them do so, there is a dire need for public, religious and community leaders to personally engage to help shift the stigma from the victims to the perpetrators of those heinous crimes. The good practices that exist in the field, such as the work of Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq and many others providing shelter to trafficking victims and promoting their destigmatization, need to be supported and shared.

United Nations country teams and peace operations on the ground can be instrumental in helping to overcome the damaging stereotypes through specific education and advocacy programmes, and they can assist in creating the necessary victim support, care and reparations mechanisms to offer sexual violence and trafficking victims a new chance at life.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of the United Arab Emirates.

Mr. Al Musharakh (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Mr. President, for having organized this important debate on conflict-related sexual violence.

(*spoke in Arabic*)

Also allow me to thank the Arab Republic of Egypt for its efforts in the presidency of the Council last month.

We also wish to thank Ms. Zainab Hawa Bangura, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, and all those who have provided briefings on the subject of this debate.

Today's debate is being held in the context of the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict. On that day, the world pays homage to survivors and supports their efforts to end that inhuman crime. Several years ago, the international community came to recognize the threat posed by conflict-related sexual violence to international peace and security. In resolution 1820 (2008) and subsequent resolutions, the Security Council recognized sexual violence as a tactic of war, constituting a threat to international peace and security. The various forms of sexual violence are considered to be war crimes and crimes against humanity, and therefore require the international community to firmly address them.

The international community's consideration of this important issue and the establishment of mechanisms to assist national authorities to combat such crimes, confront their perpetrators and provide support for victims require us to make further efforts, especially in the light of the growing phenomenon of the traffic in women and girls for the purpose of sexual violence by extremist terrorist groups, such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, and the escalating use by terrorists and extremists of sexual violence as a tool to terrorize civilians in the countries affected by internal conflict, where the smuggling of and trafficking in women and girls have become part of the political economy of those wars, as well as an ideological strategy to subdue and humiliate communities under the control of those extremist groups.

The United Arab Emirates believes that conflicted-related sexual violence can be ended only by including relevant stakeholders. In that regard, the United Arab Emirates emphasizes that the protection and empowerment of women and girls, the promotion of women's participation and support for women's role in local contexts are essential to ensuring the success of those efforts. We also stress the importance of adopting strategies to combat extremism online and in social media, which are exploited by extremist groups to promote all forms of sexual violence against women and girls and trafficking.

In addition to settling conflicts and finding peaceful solutions, we therefore believe that we have to counter extremism and terrorism at all levels, including online and in social media. Through the Sawab Center — a joint initiative of the United Arab Emirates and the United States to combat extremist messages through social media — we are intensifying the online debate and presenting moderate and tolerant voices from across the region to amplify inclusive and constructive narratives. The Sawab Center has launched numerous campaigns aimed at revealing the crimes committed by terrorist and extremist organizations against women and exposing their inhumane treatment and exploitation of women to achieve their appalling and despicable ends.

The responsibility for promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women to build more stable and secure communities lies with the international community and national authorities. That requires strengthening regional and international cooperation and coordination, particularly in the exchange of experiences of and information on the services provided to victims and survivors, the capacity-building of relevant sectors, holding perpetrators accountable, the rehabilitation of victims, and providing the necessary assistance to the affected countries in order to enhance their ability to respond. The United Nations recent conclusion of agreements and memorandums of understanding with a number of regional organizations is an important step in strengthening the desired cooperation. Those agreements seek to increase the exchange and analysis of information, provide training and capacity-building, and extend the necessary medical, psychological and social services to the victims and their families.

In that regard, I commend the efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, and United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict. I also wish to express the appreciation of the United Arab Emirates for the important role played by the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict in providing assistance to the Governments of affected countries to enhance their ability to address conflict-related sexual violence. By building national capacities, we can assist Governments in strengthening accountability for crimes of sexual violence.

In conclusion, I reiterate the support of the United Arab Emirates for the efforts of the United Nations and international partners to address and end conflict-related sexual violence.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Portugal.

Mrs. Pucarinho (Portugal): I would like to thank you, Sir, for having convened this open debate. I also thank the Secretary-General; his Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Mr. Bangura; the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially in women and children, Ms. Maria Grazia Giammarinaro; and Ms. Lisa Davis for their very comprehenisive briefings this morning.

Portugal aligns itself with the statement made earlier on behalf of the European Union. I would just like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

As several Security Council resolutions underline, ending conflict-related sexual violence is crucial to improving international peace and security. Conflict-related sexual violence has been used as tactic of warfare in numerous armed conflicts, especially by terrorist and extremist groups, affecting entire peoples and societies. We note with concern that trafficking in persons, particularly women and girls, in situations of conflict-related sexual violence has become an increasing trend, according to the report of the Secretary-General (S/2016/361).

Trafficking in human beings is one of the most serious violations of human rights. It is a complex reality — transnational in most cases — often committed within the framework of criminal organizations that prey on the vulnerabilities and weaknesses of trafficked persons. Moreover, trafficking for sexual exploitation turns individuals into commodities, which dehumanizes them and exacerbates the multiple and protracted harmful effects of conflict-related violence committed against victims. And it must be stressed that the consistent mark and trend of this crime is that most victims are women and girls.

The recent review processes of United Nations peacekeeping have recognized the disproportionate impact of armed conflict on women and girls and the existing link between peace and gender equality and women's empowerment. Ensuring respect for women's and girls' human rights and fundamental freedoms, and women's active, full and equal political, social and economic participation, including in conflict prevention and resolution processes, is in our view very critical to ending sexual violence in conflict and trafficking for sexual exploitation. It also contributes positively to peace processes and to the achievement of sustainable peace, accelerates economic recovery and development, and helps counter violent extremism. The full implementation of resolution 2242 (2015) and the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism should also be an integral part of the strategy to prevent and resolve conflicts and protect women and girls from sexual violence and trafficking.

The overwhelming majority of victims, both of conflict-related sexual violence and of associated trafficking, never see justice for what they have endured or receive the necessary assistance and support. We must fight to end the culture of impunity for those who commit such crimes. Those responsible must be brought to justice. That is a critical element of our prevention efforts, and in that regard Portugal believes that the International Criminal Court continues to play a fundamental deterrent role

As a complement to the roles of international and national tribunals, the Council should also make full use of the existing tools that provide concrete mechanisms for addressing issues of conflict-related sexual violence and suggest ways to ensure accountability that could benefit the broader implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. That could be done, for example, by guaranteeing the deployment of women's protection and gender advisers in peacekeeping operations, by enhancing the monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements on conflict-related sexual violence and by continuing to strictly implement a zero-tolerance policy with regard to sexual abuse and exploitation.

For any intervention to be deemed effective, it must be based on common efforts, which must be coordinated in the areas of prevention, awareness-raising, support, research and representation at international, regional and national levels. That includes training law enforcement and other officials to identify and protect victims, prosecuting traffickers and their accomplices and securing justice for the victims.

Portugal reiterates its pledge to continue conducting training programmes for national personnel and members of the armed and security forces and to those assigned to positions in international peacekeeping missions that deal with gender equality and violence against women and girls, including sexual violence, gender-based violence and trafficking in human beings. Portugal was one of the first European countries to adopt the Blue Heart Campaign against Human Trafficking at the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. We are currently implementing our third national action plan to prevent and combat trafficking in human beings, which covers the period up to 2017. It reflect my country's commitment, in particular within the framework of the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the European Union and the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries.

In conclusion, millions of men, women and children continue to suffer at the hands of those who benefit from conflict and violence. Preventing conflict-related sexual violence and trafficking in human beings is crucial to achieving a future of dignity, freedom for all and sustainable development, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (General Assembly resolution 70/1) and with our collective efforts towards the consolidation of peace and security.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of India.

Mr. Akbaruddin (India): We thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open debate on an issue that is of serious concern for the international community. I also thank all the speakers who briefed us earlier today.

In the past two decades, a considerable strengthening of the normative framework on the various aspects relating to women and peace and security has occurred at the Security Council and the within the broader United Nations system. Nevertheless, the scourge of sexual violence in situations of armed conflict has yet to abate. That is partly on account of the proliferation of armed conflicts and their evolving nature, involving various non-State actors and the spread of terrorism in such situations across large parts of the world. The more vulnerable sectors of society, especially women, suffer ever more in such violent conflicts.

The rapidly expanding transboundary nature of terrorist financing, supply of arms, recruitment and training of foreign fighters has led to a situation where whole regions are impacted and no country is in a position to effectively counter that menace alone. Many parts of the world are experiencing large-scale refugee crises that emanate from situations of armed conflict and terrorism. Large trafficking networks run by transnational criminal groups compound the misery of vulnerable communities, especially women.

Tackling such complex challenges demands closely coordinated and collaborative efforts among nations. Sadly, we are far from being able to come together to overcome such challenges collectively. One glaring example is the lack of progress on the issue of finalizing a comprehensive convention to counter international terrorism that can strengthen the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

As we have pointed out on earlier occasions and at other forums, the issue of women and peace and security must also be seen in the wider societal context that involves gender and development issues, which are dealt with outside the Council. In view of the cross-border dynamics of armed conflicts, it is in our collective interests to contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (General Assembly resolution 70/1), which would greatly help prevent conflict situations. Gender equality and empowerment, access to health care, education and employment and strengthening democratic institutions and processes are all important aspects of a holistic approach to prevent conflict. The normative work done in that regard outside the Council is as important as the need for the Council to do more.

Over a shorter term, the need to institutionalize the involvement of women in conflict prevention and resolution is well recognized. However, such involvement will be more effective only when it emerges from local initiatives and national efforts. When imposed from outside, their effectiveness will remain limited. The international community has a role to assist and facilitate such efforts across regions. That requires not only normative advice, but capacity-building and institution-building at the grass roots level of governance.

As pointed out in the Secretary General's latest report on the subject,

> "[p]rosecution is ... essential to prevention, because it can deter potential perpetrators and contribute to restoring faith in the rule of law." (*see S/2016/361, para. 10*).

The absence, obstruction or protracted pace of justice is unhelpful. The international community has an important role in helping build adequate resources and capacities for criminal investigation, prosecution, justice-delivery systems, protection of victims and witnesses and legislative reform to improve accountability across countries. In addition, the sanctions committees of the Security Council need to address the issue of proactively listing terrorist individuals and entities involved in situations of conflict-related sexual violence.

India is strongly committed to a zero-tolerance policy on sexual violence and abuse and provides adequate predeployment training and gender sensitization to its peacekeeping forces. The deployment of Indian female police peacekeepers in Liberia served as a role model to the local women to participate in policing and the relevant rule of law frameworks. Such participation enables improved intelligence about conflict-related sexual violence and trafficking.

As part of our continuing efforts to strengthen the relevant legal frameworks within India, earlier this week India unveiled comprehensive draft legislation aimed at the prevention and protection of trafficking of persons and the rehabilitation of trafficked persons. The draft legislation aims to unify our existing anti-trafficking laws and to protect victims and prioritize their needs. India continues to work closely with United Nations agencies, including UN-Women and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, on related issues.

India stands ready to engage with its partners to work towards addressing the issue of sexual violence in armed conflicts and to help build a sustainable peace.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Thailand.

Mr. Plasai (Thailand) (*spoke in French*): My delegation would like to to congratulate France on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. Thailand welcomes the French initiative to hold this open debate to hear the views of Member States with regard to how to respond to sexual violence and trafficking in persons in conflict situations. We also thank the Secretary-General for his detailed report (S/2016/361) on conflict-related sexual violence, as well as all the briefers for their respective presentations.

The prevalence of human trafficking in conflict situations is alarming, be it for sexual purposes, to finance criminal or terrorist activities or to attract or reward fighters. This complex issue raises grave concerns and requires our immediate response and a holistic approach.

States have the primary responsibility for prevention and for protecting their citizens and persons under its jurisdiction from falling victim to human trafficking. States must build their operational capacity to detect, investigate and disrupt human trafficking and migrant smuggling. One of the priorities is to tackle the root causes of conflict.

Focus must be placed on those most at risk, including undocumented refugees and displaced persons, as well as unaccompanied women and children affected by conflict. They are in most cases victims of sexual violence and human trafficking prior to and during their flight, in exchange for crossing borders, passage to camps or shelters, and access to personal documentation and refugee status. Such crimes are often committed by Government officials. States must ensure that preventive measures are in place and strictly enforced and that those involved are prosecuted.

The sharing of intelligence among States of origin, transit and destination, as well as with regional and international organizations, is crucial in the fight against sexual violence and human trafficking. Civil society, particularly networks of women's organizations, can play an active and efficient role in preventing such crimes. States must work closely with them and other stakeholders so as to address this issue in a more integrated manner.

The use of sexual violence as a tactic of war and terror constitutes a war crime and a crime against humanity. Perpetrators must be brought to justice. Putting an end to impunity is one of the most urgent tasks at hand.

The Security Council should strengthen its regime of targeted sanctions against individuals and entities involved in conflict-related sexual violence and human trafficking. After sanctions are imposed, it is also necessary to put in place effective monitoring mechanisms to ensure that sanctions are fully and effectively implemented.

The presence of female peacekeepers helps create a safer environment for women and girls. Given the importance of reporting and monitoring mechanisms in addressing conflict-related sexual violence, female peacekeepers can also be a trusted channel for reporting and information-sharing. This is crucial to enable victims to gain access to legal assistance and medical treatment and to allow the authorities to identify and prosecute those who have committed sexual violence or are involved in trafficking networks.

Against that backdrop, Thailand has made consistent efforts to train Thai female peacekeepers to address conflict-related sexual violence and human trafficking, as well as to increase their number in the contingent. We also support the efforts of the United Nations to appoint more gender adviser and women protection officers, as well as to integrate a gender perspective into the implementation of peacekeeping mandates, both at the policy and operational levels.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that the international community can count on Thailand's commitment to and active engagement in this important issue.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Israel.

Mr. Roet (Israel): The Secretary-General's 2016 report on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2016/361) is a catalog of stories and statistics that shock the conscience: a Da'esh competition on memorizing the Koran, with a Yazidi woman as the grand prize; public auctions where women are sold to the highest bidder; and a widely distributed magazine containing "questions and answers" on the Da'esh code of sexual enslavement.

This level of cruelty and denial of basic humanity is almost unimaginable. But for women and girls living under the barbaric rule of Da'esh, this is a daily reality. The conflict-related horrors that women face are by no means limited to Da'esh-controlled territory.

Accounts of rape; sexual slavery; child, early and forced marriage; and other forms of sexual violence are widespread and attest to the impunity that the perpetrators enjoy.

Over and over again, in conflicts around the world, we have seen that sexual violence is not just a byproduct of conflict; it is a deliberate weapon of war and a tactic of terror. In Syria, sexual violence has been systematically employed. Government forces use rape to suppress anti-Al-Assad resistance in communities associated with opposition forces. Detention centres and checkpoints throughout the country have become notorious sites of sexual violence.

Instead of protecting Syrian women, the Al-Assad regime is using terror tactics against them.

The world is facing the most severe refugee crisis since the Second World War. The crisis has left millions without a home, without money and without hope. Criminal elements have taken advantage of the plight of these refugees to engage in the trafficking of women and girls for commercial sex and sexual slavery. In some notorious cases, smugglers require sex as payment for transportation across national borders.

The dreams of mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, of a new life on safer shores are shattered by the nightmare of sexual violence and exploitation.

Violent extremist terrorist groups such as Da'esh and Boko Haram have adopted the most depraved forms of sexual violence as a key part of their official ideology.

The systematic sexual enslavement and trafficking of women is part of their method of recruitment, their source of revenue and their means of terrorizing the population.

Da'esh lures young men and boys, including foreign fighters, with the promise of sex slaves. Yazidi women recount being forced to marry new recruits and being exchanged as gifts between veteran fighters. Many girls and women have attempted suicide to avoid forced marriages or religious conversion. For them, falling into the hands of Da'esh is a fate worse than death.

Trafficking in women and girls knows no boundaries. Extremist groups are utilizing social media to advertise the availability of women for sale. Da'esh posts pictures of kidnapped women on its Facebook page, listing their background, their skills and a price tag.

All perpetrators of sexual violence should be held to account, especially when they are the ones sent to prevent such heinous crimes from happening in the first place.

We strongly support the zero-tolerance policy of the Secretary-General. United Nations peacekeepers and non-United Nations forces who have broken the very trust that has been bestowed upon them must be brought to justice.

Let me also emphasize that Israel believes very strongly in the protection and empowerment of young girls and proudly sponsored resolution 68/148, of 2014, on child, early, and forced marriage to help put an end to the practice of child marriage.

It is hard to believe that such human cruelty, in the form of sexual violence, even exists. At times you want to tell yourself that these atrocities are happening in another universe. But they are not. They are happening in our world, in our time and on our watch. Think of the 219 girls of Chibok, Nigeria, still missing from their homes; think of their fathers and mothers praying every night for the day they will see their daughters again. Think of the thousands of Yazidi girls abducted, sold as slaves, raped and impregnated.

Now think of what each and every one of us would do if these were our own daughters and our own wives. And now, let us not just think of them; let us act, and let us act as if they were our own. This kind of evil has no place in our world. Let us unite to defeat it.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Belgium.

Ms. Frankinet (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): My delegation would like to start by conveying its gratitude to you, Mr. President, for having organized this debate as well as for the opportunity afforded Belgium to participate therein.

The fight against sexual violence is a priority for Belgium. My country wishes to thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2016/361) and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict for her untiring commitment to the cause. My country welcomes also the presence of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in human beings and thanks her for briefing this morning.

My delegation fully supports the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union. I shall therefore limit my remarks to a few points of particular importance for Belgium.

First, Belgium endorses the conclusion of the Secretary-General that suppression is an essential element in preventing sexual violence related to conflict, including by terrorist and violent extremist groups. The Special Rapporteur also underscores that when it comes to trafficking in persons in conflict situations, and she identifies fragile or non-existent justice systems as a contributing factor to trafficking. That is a reason that Belgium has made the fight against impunity a priority. In that regard, my delegation would like to mention that, on 7 June, along with UN-Women, it will hold an event on the occasion of the publication of the book entitled *Prosecuting Conflict-Related Sexual Violence: Lessons Learned From the ICTY*.

The integration of the gender dimension is another key element in the fight against sexual violence. Along with protecting women and girls against sexual violence, that is one of the main goals of our second national action plan, covering the period 2013-2016, on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). It is against that backdrop that Belgium intends to support the call of the Secretary-General to give women the means to participate in efforts to encourage families and communities to resist the terrorist strategy on sexual violence. My country also believes that it is imperative to work with traditional and religious leaders, who can help to turn back on the perpetrators of sexual violence the stigmatization with which victims are being regularly targeted.

Belgium also wishes to point out, as does the Secretary-General, the importance of clearly understanding the link between human trafficking and sexual violence during and after conflict. Current conflicts are increasingly linked to human trafficking, especially in women and children, whose vulnerability is exacerbated by the conflicts themselves. Belgium is therefore pleased that this link between human trafficking and conflict was chosen by the Special Rapporteur as the theme of her latest report, whose great relevance my delegation would like to highlight.

For its part, Belgium is committed to implement its new national action plan against human trafficking for the period 2015-2019, in which the gender dimension has also been taken into account. As noted by the Special Rapporteur, the nature and form of trafficking in conflict situations differ by gender, and trafficking for sexual exploitation affects women and girls disproportionately.

Furthermore, Belgium shares the concerns expressed about the impact of conflict on child trafficking. Belgium is particularly concerned about the Secretary-General's observation concerning the danger posed by the fact that in countries where women do not have the right to pass on their nationality to their children, where births are not registered and where children, particularly those born of rape, find themselves marginalized, children are even further exposed.

Finally, my delegation would like to conclude by emphasizing the importance of the recommendation of the Secretary-General calling on the Security Council to fully include the issue of sexual violence in conflict in the work of the sanctions committees and to ensure that they avail themselves of the advice of experts in the field. The indisputable legitimacy of sanctions adopted in this context will greatly enhance our collective efforts in the fight against this scourge, which Belgium is committed to continue unabated.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa.

Mr. Mminele (South Africa): I would like to thank you, Mr President, and the French delegation for the convening of this timely open debate on sexual violence in conflict.

Sexual violence in conflict remains one of the most harrowing and serious problems facing civilian populations, who have to endure the wanton targeting of vulnerable groups in times when State authority is undermined. Women are often considered the bedrock of any society. When they are targeted, the very heart of the population is threatened. It is therefore vital that we do all we can to refine our policies, but also to support States, which have the primary responsibility for ensuring the safety of their people.

In order to generate greater sensitivity with regard to women who are affected by the breakdown of State authority that many contemporary conflicts entail, it is necessary that they be included in the political decision-making mechanisms of any country. Furthermore, women have an important role to play in both peacekeeping and the mediation of conflicts. With regard to the former, greater participation by women at all levels in United Nations multidimensional peacekeeping missions would help provide a stronger approach to the implementation of the protection-of-civilians mandates of United Nations mission, in particular as it relates to sexual violence against women. South Africa welcomes the recommendation made by the Secretary-General in his report (S/2016/361) on conflict-related sexual violence to ensure that troop-contributing countries abide by the measures required in resolution 2106 (2013).

We are also encouraged by the leading role played by the African Union (AU) through its commitment to gender mainstreaming and its development and adoption of the *Gender Training Manual for AU Peace Support Operations*. That is in line with the recommendation of the Secretary-General to train all peacekeeping personnel on gender sensitivity and address conflict-related sexual violence.

South Africa has been actively involved in the training of women mediators in conflict. However, we strongly support the Secretary-General's recommendation that mediators be called upon to include gender and conflict-related sexual violence expertise as part of their mediation support teams. Furthermore, the appointment of senior-level women to mediation roles is also sorely needed.

We recognize that the scourge of conflict-related sexual violence can be used as a tactic of war and of terrorism. While we agree with the Secretary-General that measures to address that should be aligned, allowing for broader strategies to prevent violent extremism, we believe that, like terrorism, sexual violence as a tactic is based on society's broader approach to how it treats women — in particular misogynistic tendencies inherent in patriarchal societies that allow for women to be treated with disdain and inhumanely. Therefore, the interests of women and notions of gender equality should be mainstreamed into our governance and leadership mechanisms. Women should be involved in decision-making and participate in the economies of their societies so as to end the trend of sexual violence again women. Women's voices need to be heard, and they also need to be at the forefront of the war against impunity and the fight against poverty and finding the right solutions to ending such abuses during and outside of conflicts.

While sexual abuses and exploitation in conflict situations need to be urgently addressed, due attention to the post-conflict situation, and in particular to the survivors of such abuses, needs greater attention. We concur with the Secretary-General's recommendation that relief and recovery programmes should be put in place to begin to heal the psychosocial wounds that result from such heinous violations. A zero-tolerance approach should be adopted, and stricter and effective punitive mechanisms need to be put in place, such as improving conviction rates and integrating legal support options, as well as removing obstacles to reporting of such cases.

We also support the recommendation of the Secretary-General to support capacity-building for civilians and military justice systems in order to safeguard against impunity. Furthermore, women's legal status and rights must be ensured in post-conflict situations. Strengthening the legal framework to address issues of discrimination against women with respect to land ownership, access to economic opportunity and employment, education and health care is an essential component of gender-responsive peacebuilding. Ultimately, Member States have the primary responsibility to put an end to impunity and to prosecute perpetrators responsible for crimes against humanity and war crimes, including those related to sexual violence against women and girls.

In conclusion, South Africa remains committed to addressing the scourge of conflict-related sexual violence against women in all its manifestations, and will work tirelessly in supporting the broader global response to ending this blight within the wider context of addressing the root causes of both conflicts and sexual violence in general.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Canada.

Mr. Bonser (Canada) (*spoke in French*): Canada welcomes this debate on sexual violence in conflict, which focuses in particular on trafficking in human beings, in anticipation of the commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict, which will take place on 19 June.

Unfortunately, we know that sexual violence affects women, men and children in conflict situations throughout the world. Canada unreservedly condemns such practices and seeks to end them, to help victims and to hold those responsible accountable for their actions. We also know that women and girls are the main victims of rape, slavery, forced marriages and trafficking in human beings, including the most flagrant violations committed by such extremist groups such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham and Boko Haram.

Sexual violence in all its forms is highly detrimental to the ability of women to make a useful contribution to the life of their communities and their country, yet the contribution of empowered women is an essential precondition for lasting peace and prosperity.

(*spoke in English*)

We welcome the recent report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2016/361) in some 19 countries, in which he makes important recommendations to the Security Council and the Member States. We also welcome the testimony of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, and thank her for her tireless work in assessing situations of grave concern around the world, including in the Middle East, and her work as Chair of United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict. We are pleased to be supporting the work of her Office with a contribution of $3 million over three years. We also note the important work done by experts deployed through the partnership between UN-Women and Justice Rapid Response in investigating and documenting sexual violence. Canada is also pleased to support this work.

As a leading advocate in raising international awareness of the costs of child, early and forced marriage, Canada is especially concerned by reports of increased rates of such marriages in situations of conflict and displacement. To better understand the reasons for this increase, Canada funded research by the Women's Refugee Commission on how traditional practices associated with these types of marriages change during conflict and displacement. The study determined strategies for integrating the prevention of and response to child, early and forced marriages in conflict and emergency situations.

Canada also believes that human trafficking, an affront to human rights and dignity, should be confronted with the full weight of domestic and international law. Traffickers view their victims not as human beings, but as commodities to be exploited for their own financial gain. Women and children are particularly vulnerable to human traffickers, and even more so in times of conflict. Refugees and migrants also face great risks. As one of the first countries to ratify the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Canada takes very seriously its obligations under Protocol to prevent human trafficking and prosecute the perpetrators, and calls on all Member States to do the same.

Sexual violence committed by peacekeepers also causes serious harm to vulnerable populations and threatens the effectiveness and credibility of United Nations peace operations. Every effort must be made to support the implementation of the United Nations zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse.

(*spoke in French*)

Finally, I note that the Government of Canada has launched a review of its international assistance to determine the best way to help the poorest and most vulnerable, to support fragile States and align our priorities in international assistance with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (General Assembly resolution 70/1). We want to know how the empowerment women and girls and the protection and promotion of their rights through action in favour of gender equality can be integrated into Canada's international aid activities. Recognizing the importance of the participation of all concerned, we invite the different actors — Canadian and international — interest in international assistance to participate in the review. They have until the end of July to submit comments.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands.

Mr. Menkveld (Netherlands): At the outset, I would like to express my gratitude to the Secretary-General, his Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict and the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children for their important statements on this urgent matter.

My delegation welcomes the report on conflict-related sexual violence that was submitted in April by the Secretary-General (S/2016/361). We also welcome this debate on responding to human trafficking in situations of conflict-related sexual violence, which is taking place a few days before the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict. This is an important Day that reminds us all of the horrible experiences which survivors of human trafficking face daily.

Responding to human trafficking in situations of armed conflict is key. We look forward to the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of mechanisms to counter trafficking in persons, and express support for the work of the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict.

Current conflicts, like those in Syria or South Sudan, are one of the root causes of the increase in human trafficking. As a consequence of armed conflict, refugees and migrants attempt to find safety and security outside their countries. Criminals have established an infrastructure to extort these people in their search for a safe place. Reports show that people-smugglers demand sex as payment of passage. The sexual exploitation of a growing group of vulnerable women and girls in a cross-border context makes it essential to combat trafficking in persons nationally, regionally and globally.

Also the motivations for extremist groups to commit human trafficking are disturbing. Vulnerable groups of women and girls are trafficked and used to compensate fighters or to finance operations. As extremist groups often perceive civilian populations as a resource for commodities, women and girls are seen for the commodities they can deliver, which is their sexuality and fertility. As a result, women and girls become a commodity in the supply and demand of the political economy of war. Women and children often become victims of human trafficking in situations of conflict-related sexual violence. In addition to the physical scars, the stigmatization and marginalization might leave even deeper scars on these vulnerable groups.

In our vision, women and women's organizations have great potential to contribute to ending human trafficking, as the Security Council has acknowledged in its resolutions on women, peace and security. We believe that commitment to keep implementing these resolutions is important in responding to and for the protection of vulnerable groups against human trafficking.

To make protection sustainable we should also focus on prevention. We cannot protect women if we do not empower them and include them in decision-making processes. This is not a symbolic gesture, but a reality that we have to acknowledge within the Security Council. Women should be enabled to protect themselves, and their rights should be acknowledged and promoted. It is time that the international community acknowledge the intertwined relation between women's protection and women's participation in issues of peace and security.

The Netherlands would like to present four ways forward in which we, the international community, can better prevent and respond to human trafficking in situations of conflict-related sexual violence.

First of all, we need to systematically cooperate with civil society and local communities in the prevention of, and responses to, human trafficking. Local communities and civil society are important stakeholders and advocates. They know how to reach the survivors and the perpetrators. We have to continue preventing and responding to human trafficking, but we also have to decrease the negative consequences of human trafficking for local communities. We need to support women and girls in overcoming the stigmatization, discrimination and prejudices that affect their access to services, and eventually their human rights. In order to reintegrate victims, Governments and the international community have to work together with local communities.

Secondly, United Nations peacekeeping missions are often confronted with human trafficking. It is time that we mandate them to help address the problem.

Thirdly, the perpetrators of human trafficking and other conflict-related sexual violence should be brought to justice. To strengthen local justice systems, the Netherlands supports, for instance, Iraqi women's organizations that train local courts and other criminal justice authorities on how to deal with cases of sexual violence related to armed conflict. The Netherlands attaches great value to legitimate and professional justice systems and supports rule of law programming in several countries.

Fourthly, we feel that countering human trafficking and sexual violence against women during their journeys should be prominently addressed in the context of the forthcoming United Nations summit on addressing large movements of migrants and refugees, to be held in September.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands has been a partner of the the international community's for peace, justice and development, and we will continue to be so.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil.

Mr. De Aguiar Patriota (Brazil) (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Mr. President, for having organized this debate.

(*spoke in English*)

I would also like to thank the Secretary-General, as well as Ms. Zainab Hawa Bangura, Ms. Maria Grazia Giammarinaro and Ms. Lisa Davis for their briefings.

The scourge of sexual violence in conflict continues to jeopardize the dignity and integrity of vulnerable populations around the world, predominantly women and girls. This despicable phenomenon is connected to a widespread culture of impunity towards sexual violence that continues to exist in all countries.

Brazil vigorously condemns all acts of rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, forced abortion, enforced sterilization and forced marriage in the context of armed conflict. These abuses represent violations of international humanitarian law and may constitute crimes against humanity. There can be no excuse or justification for the deliberate use of sexual violence as a weapon of war, as an instrument of subjugation or as a tactic of terror.

In the context of the ongoing global refugee crisis, the link between human trafficking and sexual violence in conflict, as recognized recently by presidential statement S/PRST/2015/25, represents a particularly serious concern. We welcome the most recent multilateral initiatives to raise awareness about this distressing issue. Let me highlight the establishment by the General Assembly of the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict, to be celebrated on 19 June, following an initiative led by Argentina and supported by Brazil from the outset.

The global study on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) revealed in great detail how the impact of war, including sexual violence, is compounded by pre-existing gender inequalities and discrimination against women and girls.

Last March, the International Criminal Court concluded its first trial that specifically emphasized the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war, in connection with war crimes and crimes against humanity perpetrated in the Central African Republic.

In its agreed conclusions, the sixtieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), which I had the honour of chairing, strongly condemned all forms of violence against all women and girls as impediments to the full achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Furthermore, the review theme of this year's session of the CSW was the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls, including sexual and gender-based violence.

While acknowledging those positive developments, Brazil stresses that the most effective way to avert the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war would be to intensify political and diplomatic efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts. A decisive step towards this goal would be to pursue a gender-sensitive approach to peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding, with women fully recognized as actors, not just victims. In that regard, we underline the adoption of resolution 2282 (2016), in which the Security Council encourages the Secretary-General to promote the gender dimensions of peacebuilding and calls upon the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) to integrate a gender perspective into all of its work — an approach that already guides the PBC.

The Brazilian Government is currently drafting its first national action plan on women and peace and security through a joint effort by the Ministries for Foreign Affairs, Defence, Justice, and Citizenship, as well as UN-Women and civil society. Policies to protect women and girls from the consequences of war and to prevent sexual and gender-based violence, including sexual violence in conflict, will be a key component of our national action plan.

Our South-South cooperation agenda is closely attuned to the need to offer legal, medical, psychosocial and mental-health assistance to the victims of sexual abuse arising from war and instability. In Guinea-Bissau, Haiti and the Democratic Republic of the Congo we have supported projects to assist victims of sexual and gender-based violence and to uphold criminal accountability for these serious violations.

In coordination with UN-Women, Brazilian peacekeepers and civilian personnel undergo rigorous predeployment training to ensure the highest standards of conduct and discipline. We fully support the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy concerning sexual exploitation and abuse, and we emphasize the need to emphasize preventive measures in that regard.

In conclusion, allow me to reiterate Brazil's commitment to preventing and combating the heinous use of sexual violence as a weapon of war. We stand ready to cooperate with all United Nations bodies involved in this campaign, including the entities whose efforts are coordinated by the UN Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Morocco.

Mr. Laassel (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, allow me to congratulate France on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of June and to thank it for organizing this open debate on sexual violence in conflict situations.

This debate has been organized at the right time, as it coincides with a comprehensive overhauling of peacekeeping operations and the peacebuilding architecture. It is right that the consideration of those reforms should take into account the aspect of sexual violence, which often victimize civilians populations.

Regardless of who the victims are, violence has always been condemned, but sexual violence in times of conflict must be condemned even more because of its social and cultural implications for a population that is already very vulnerable. The Security Council has been seized of this matter for more than 16 sixteen years through the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) and related resolutions that followed it. Those resolutions have allowed for a historic breakthrough in more than one respect, as they unanimously condemn sexual violence and call for greater efforts to protect women and fight impunity. They also stress the need to involve women in peace negotiation and national reconciliation processes and in the political and economic reconstruction of their societies.

Following the adoption of those resolutions, international awareness on this issue has been raised to the maximum and significant progress has been made. Member States have shown themselves to be united and committed to addressing sexual violence and to supporting the United Nations zero-tolerance policy with regard to any form of sexual exploitation or violence. Similarly, the United Nations has tackled the issue of the fight against trafficking with, inter alia, the establishment in the Human Rights Council of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, and the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, thereby underscoring the need to carry out cooperation at the international level in the fight against this transnational and varied phenomenon.

Despite the progress made in the protection of women and girls against sexual violence, we have not reached the end of the road — far from it. The multiple reoccurrences and persistence of sexual violence in current conflicts remain alarming. Women and children especially are deprived of protection and support during conflict and face destructive forms of sexual violence. They are systematically exploited to achieve military or political objectives. They suffer the most from the devastating consequences of conflicts and pay a heavy price because of their great vulnerability.

Published reports on the issue of sexual violence in conflict situations clearly show that the past few years have been charachterized by an exacerbation on an unprecedented scale of rape, sexual slavery, forced marriage and human trafficking by extremist groups as a terror tactic. Terrorist groups and non-State armed groups are increasingly using sexual violence as a form of persecution or to forcibly displace populations.

Women and children, in fleeing violence and fighting, find themselves yet again exposed to the risks of sexual exploitation, rape and prostitution. Even worse, today they are sold in slave markets to the highest bidder. Information obtained in the case of thousands of women and children kidnapped and held in captivity by terrorist movements, such as Da'esh and Boko Haram, with the intent of selling them as slaves or to meet the sexual needs of their fighters, remain shocking and clearly show the barbarous and inhumane practices experienced by those victims.

The majority of the victims of sexual violence remain silent because they fear threats, reprisal or intimidation. It is not just to the victims who talk who face such risks, but also their families, witnesses, human rights defenders and any other individual who seeks to denounce this silence.

Sexual violence, as well as the threats of such acts or the incitement to commit them, constitute a serious violation of international humanitarian law and of human rights law, and it is a serious violation of the Geneva Conventions. Prevention and the fight against sexual violence cannot be effective without international political will and firm measures for accountability against those who continue to act with disregard for international law and the norms on the protection of women and children. Judicial preceedings and the fight against crime are insufficient to fight human trafficking. It is imperative to prosecute it and ensure the protection of the victims.

We should like today's debate to contribute to enriching the reflection on ending to this global scourge.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Argentina.

Mr. Estreme (Argentina) (*spoke in French*): I wish to thank France for having organized this open debate of the Security Council on such an important topic for the international community. I also wish to thank the Secretary-General, Ms. Bangura, Ms. Giammarinaro and Ms. Davis, who provided briefings this morning.

(*spoke in Spanish*)

For Argentina, it is an honour to attend this open debate within the framework of the first formal commemoration on 19 June as the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict, which the General Assembly approved in resolution 69/293 of 19 June 2015. Allow me to recall that the adoption of that resolution was an initiative of my country, with 114 Member States sponsors, which represents a clear demonstration of the gravity and importance the international community assigns to this issue. At the same time, the Security Council, especially on the basis of resolutions 1325 (2000) and 2122 (2013), has reaffirmed its increasing commitment to the prevention and eradication of sexual and gender violence in conflict and post-conflict situations, as well as to the search for justice and reparation for the victims.

Argentina firmly supports the efforts of the Secretary-General and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and endorses the recommendations in the Secretary-General's latest report (S/2016/361) relating to the combat and elimination of all forms of sexual violence against women and children in the context of armed conflicts and post-conflict situations and the actions of violent extremist groups.

The increasing crimes of sexual violence perpetrated by violent extremist groups as a strategy to terrorize, intimidate and stigmatize specific groups — such as women, girls and boys, religious minorities, lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender people, displaced persons and others — are international crimes of the greatest gravity. At appropriate times international tribunals, such as those for Rwanda and for the former Yugoslavia and the Special Tribunal for Sierra Leone, have achieved decisive progress by defining sexual violence as an act of torture, a war crime and a crime against humanity. Crimes of sexual violence in conflicts must be prevented and punished within the strict framework of legality, making use of the available tools and mechanisms, including sanctions and referring cases to the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court.

We reiterate that it is necessary to continue joining the efforts of all actors involved to prevent, combat and eradicate crimes of sexual violence in situations of conflict and human trafficking; to bring to justice the perpetrators of such war crimes and crimes against humanity; and to protect, assist and reintegrate the victims of such violations and restore their dignity and human rights. That must continue to be our priority, and it must be taken into account when defining the mandates of peacekeeping operations and special political missions, as well as in the peacebuilding efforts of this Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, integrating specialists into the different missions set up by the Council.

When we speak of sexual violence in conflict situations, we scannot fail to refer to the cases of sexual abuse and exploitation that, unfortunately, continue to occur in United Nations peacekeeping missions. This is a grave situation, and it constitutes the greatest challenge, in our opinion, for the future of those missions and for the image of the United Nations as a whole. In that regard, Argentina continues to firmly support the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy, as well as the distinct measures he proposes in his various reports and those contained in resolution 2272 (2016) — zero tolerance, of course, but also maximum prevention and support for victims. In that regard, we welcome the appointment of Ms. Jane Holl Lute as the new Special Coordinator on Improving United Nations Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, as well as the creation of a fund to support victims of sexual exploitation and abuse.

Sexual violence in armed conflicts is one of the most elementary and terrible violations of human dignity, which constitutes an unmistakable and inescapable threat to international peace and security. That is why we must continue to combine efforts to ensure the protection and full enjoyment of all human rights of men and women, girls and boys, in the conditions of equality.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Côte d'Ivoire.

Mr. Bouah-Kamon (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): I congratulate you, Mr. President, on France's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of June. It is a great pleasure for my delegation to take part in this debate on sexual violence in conflict situations. We thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2016/361), and through him we also wish to thank Ms. Zainab Hawa Bangura and her team for their commitment and determination to figh sexual violence in the context of conflicts. I also wish to thank and congratulate Ms. Maria Grazia Giammarinaro and Ms. Lisa Davis for their excellent respective briefings.

The rise and recurrence of sexual violence during conflicts are without doubt one of the major problems facing countries in conflict and those emerging from conflict. That violence, which has disastrous consequences for the victims, their families and the community, is unacceptable and constitutes a grave violation of international humanitarian law, international criminal law and international human rights law. Sexual violence in conflict must therefore be vigorously combated, and the perpetrators must be prosecuted before the competent courts to answer for their actions.

My country, which has undergone nearly a decade of crisis, has unfortunately recorded cases of sexual violence, essentially in the form of individual and mass rapes. In its firm will to combat that phenomenon, the Ivorian Government has, in addition to availing itself of the existing legal frameworks, implemented a national strategy against gender-based violence. Accordingly, the reported cases of sexual violence in Côte d'Ivoire committed during the period of conflict have today a legal framework in which they can be put on the docket. Along with the ongoing capacity-building of the judiciary, the majority of perpetrators — whether their status be civilian or military — once apprehended, are prosecuted before the competent courts.

With regard to military personnel in particular, the Ministry of Defence has implemented several specific measures since 2011, including a plan of action for the Forces républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire (FRCI) in connection with violence linked to conflicts. The plan of action is defined along four major lines, namely, strengthening the capacities of the FRCI to respond to conflict-related sexual violence; strengthening the institutional framework for the prevention and suppression of sexual violence within the FRCI; increasing outcomes in the fight against impunity in connection with crimes of sexual violence committed by the FRCI; and monitoring and evaluating the activities and efforts aimed at fighting sexual violence committed by the FRCI. The the plan of action of the FRCI aimed at fighting sexual violence enjoys significant budgetary support from the State.

As I have just indicated, the Ivorian Government is determined both to act to suppress sexual violence linked to conflict and to work to prevent it. My country adheres to the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy and to the relevant provisions of the subsequent resolutions of the General Assembly. My delegation welcomes the fact that the report of the Secretary-General mentions the efforts undertaken by the Government of my country and the entire readiness of the Ivorian authorities to cooperate in complete transparency with the competent entities within the United Nations system.

Nevertheless, my delegation has questions with regard to certain allegations contained in the report, such as that of a victim of 2 years and 10 months of age. As far as it is concerned, the Ivorian Government is fully committed to continue its tireless efforts aimed at combatting sexual violence within its military units. Accordingly, it has urged the FRCI senior command to adopt a code of conduct intended for all members of the armed forces.

In conclusion, given the progress made in the fight against sexual violence and the return to stability and peace in Côte d'Ivoire, my Government requests the delisting of the FRCI from the list appended to the forthcoming report of the Secretary-General to be published this year.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Nigeria.

Mr. Haidara (Nigeria): I thank the delegation of France for having convened this open debate and for the excellent concept note (S/2016/496, annex) provided to guide our discussion. I commend the Secretary-General for his remarks earlier this morning. The Secretary-General's latest report (S/2016/361) presents an operational context for conflict-related sexual violence. My commendation also goes to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Bangura, Ms. Giammarinaro and Ms. Davis for their informative briefings.

In recent times, the myth that only men suffer from the scourge of war has been broken. Contemporary violent extremism in all parts of the world has rendered women and girls exceedingly vulnerable. In today's armed conflicts, women living in areas of conflict, who are essentially non-combatants, suffer as much, if not more, than soldiers in active service. It is therefore essential to include in our search for answers broader questions about the prevalence of conflict-related sexual violence.

In our quest to proffer enduring solutions to the issue, we must focus our searchlight beyond situations of active conflict and onto all human situations. As conflicts do not exist in isolation, it is unlikely that we can understand sexual violence outside the larger context of human society. We must seek a full, moral and helpful understanding of the correlation between sexual violence in societies on either side of the conflict divide. Preventing sexual violence is a critical element in fighting this ugly phenomenon, regardless of the context. We therefore commend United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict for having adapted its framework of early warning indicators of conflict-related sexual violence for use in several countries.

Acts of terrorism have today become a major cause of displacement of persons, both within nations and across borders. Through their actions, terrorists have endangered the well-being of thousands of women and girls. We condemn, in the strongest terms, the abduction, trafficking and mistreatment of women and girls by extremist groups. That underscores the urgent need for the international community to fight violent extremism and the ideologies that fuel it.

The date 14 April 2016 marked the second year of the infamous abduction of 276 Nigerian school girls by the terrorist group Boko Haram. The Nigerian Government, as well as the Nigerian people, is united in a strong determination to find and free them all and other victims of sexual violence perpetrated by that terrorist group. To date, remarkable success has been recorded. Together with our neighbours Chad, Cameroon and the Niger, we are winning the war against Boko Haram. We are confident that the group will be crushed and that its leaders and members will be held accountable for the war crimes and crimes against humanity that they have committed.

Nigeria takes note of the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report and expresses its support for them. We note that, in resolution 2242 (2015), the Security Council recognized sexual violence as both a tactic of war and of terrorism. That is evident in the actions of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham, Boko Haram and other extremist groups. We therefore see merit in aligning efforts to address conflict-related sexual violence with efforts to prevent extremism. As part of the efforts of the Nigerian Government to counter violent extremism, steps are being taken under a multidimensional approach that encompasses peace, security and development. The main focus of that approach is de-radicalization, countering the extremist narrative and advancing economic regeneration.

We are convinced that the United Nations remains the central forum for addressing the women and peace and security agenda. We acknowledge the progress made to date through the continuous, concerted efforts of various United Nations mechanisms in addressing conflict-related sexual violence. Nigeria stands ready to continue to work with our United Nations and international partners in this important endeavour.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Sudan.

Mr. Mohamed (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me first to congratulate you, Sir, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I should also like to express my thanks to the delegation of the Arab Republic of Egypt for its presidency of the Council during the past month.

At the outset, my delegation commends the French presidency for organizing this open debate on the theme of "Women and peace and security. Responding to human trafficking in situations of conflict-related sexual violence". We also welcome the Secretary-General's briefing this morning.

I hope that the four minutes assigned to me, as to all other delegations, will allow me to set out before members what the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict has failed to do. Since I presented my credentials to the Secretary-General in August 2015, I have requested a meeting with her more than once. To date I have had no reply. Nevertheless, we thank her for her attention to that issue and for her draft report of 11 February. We replied to the paragraphs related to the Sudan in the report on 19 November 2015, in both English and Arabic. To date we not received no answer, despite our wish to discuss those paragraphs with her. Furthermore, no references are given for the facts presented in paragraphs 63 to 67 on the Sudan in the Secretary-General's report (S/2016/361), nor could we find any information that we presented to her in those paragraphs.

Today I am certain that the Secretariat — which is supposed to be the Secretariat of all Member States, large and small, of countries that established and created the United Nations, with which the Secretariat should cooperate closely — instead of working with all countries, targets only certain States. Without such information the Secretariat's, reports would mean absolutely nothing. We find them distasteful. We therefore believe that the Security Council should take account of the following facts.

First, a report of the Secretary-General is presented to Member States only 24 hours before the Security Council takes it up.

Secondly, the aforementioned report claims to cover the period from January to December 2015 while it reiterates its accusation against the Sudanese Armed Forces of collective rape in Tabit village in October 2014, while also claiming that the rape began in October 2015. We find it odd that this rape began and never ended despite the fact the United Nations-African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) report of 9 November 2015, I recall, denied that the Sudanese Armed Forces had perpetrated any such crime. The fact that some have called for a new investigation into the Tabit events merely shows that they intend to take this opportunity, and certainly not to squander it, to condemn the Government of the Sudan and the Sudanese Armed Forces, and to insist on condemning them based not on facts but on very narrow interests.

Thirdly, why does the report not take up the accusations and allegations that some individuals associated with the United Nations perpetrated acts of sexual violence despite the zero-tolerance policy that has been in place since 2003?

Regardless of what the Secretary-General's report may say, my Government is particularly concerned with women's issues. That is demonstrated by a number of initiatives that have led to the implementation of a number of strategies and national plans, such as the 25-year strategy for women, the national strategy to combat violence against women, the national policy to empower women and the national policy to protect women. In addition, the Government has established both a unit to combat gender violence and a national independent human rights commission based on the Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups. We have accorded particular attention to the issues of violence against women, particularly for women in camps for internally displaced persons in Darfur, the Blue Nile region and South Kordofan, in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund and the human rights division of the country team in the Sudan.

In order to mitigate the threat of human trafficking in women and girls, and since Sudan is a sub-Saharan transit country that has witnessed a number of such crimes, my Government approved a national law on human trafficking aimed at women and girls in particular. In 2014, my capital, Khartoum, hosted the high-level African Union Regional Conference on Human Trafficking and Smuggling in the Horn of Africa, with broad international and regional participation, leading to the Declaration of the Ministerial Conference of the Khartoum Process. The Government also signed treaties to secure its borders with a number of neighbouring countries in order to prevent the movement of arms and to curb the actions of rebel groups that violate human rights.

I shall be brief in my few remaining minutes.

We believe that this issue is very important and that it should be accorded the appropriate degree of priority, but we regret the information provided in the Secretary-General's report on conflict-related sexual violence, in which information from unreliable and biased sources is used to distort the truth. It makes reference to events of collective rape that took place in 2014. How ironic it is that the information provided in the report came from UNAMID, which has denied the occurrence of such crimes following a visit by its officials to the area and the conduct of an urgent investigation. We observe such a lack of credibility in a number of reports presented by the Secretary-General. Paragraph 63 of this report states that 53 per cent of acts of sexual violence take place in "isolated areas", that is outside State control. It is illogical for the State to be held responsible while, at the same time, the report states clearly that the activities of rebel groups led to the isolation of those regions and those groups failed to provide security to the citizens living there.

Finally, the report also refers to the difficulty of reaching areas where the alleged violence takes place. It references cases of stigmatization and a fear of retaliation, but can cite no data to back up such claims, revealing the flaws in its methodology. The report and the figures it cites lack credibility. It denies that the police forces followed up on reports of the incidents, and instead blames them for not following up.

Regardless, we shall continue to cooperate with the Secretary-General and the United Nations to achieve the objectives of the Organization in that regard.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Switzerland.

Mr. Zehnder (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Switzerland wishes to thank the French presidency for having organized this debate and welcomes the latest report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2016/361) and its recommendations.

Switzerland would like to emphasize three elements: first, protection challenges in the face of large movements of migrants and forcefully displaced persons; secondly, trafficking in persons, in particular women and children, as a means to fuel armed conflict, terrorism and violent extremism; and thirdly, the importance of ending impunity for sexual and gender-based violence.

Switzerland is deeply concerned by the accounts of exploitation and trafficking in the context of large-scale movements of refugees and migrants. For this reason, we welcome the presence of Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially in women and children, among us today.

Unregistered individuals on the move and displaced persons are particularly vulnerable to trafficking, especially women and girls. They are easy victims for criminal networks, including organized crime. We need to adopt a broad perspective and include all relevant actors: peacekeeping forces, border police, immigration officials and humanitarian actors. Indeed, they all have a role to play in preventing and fighting trafficking. These actors should work on the basis of a gender-sensitive approach that includes the use of female officers and personnel.

Restrictive migration policies that limit opportunities for women and girls fleeing conflict zones increase the latter's vulnerability to exploitation and trafficking. Through increased dialogue and cooperation, we should find ways to adjust these policies and to ensure that women and girls coming from conflict-affected areas are not subject to trafficking.

As underscored in the most recent report of the Secretary-General, the trafficking of women and girls has become a full-fledged element of the economy of war and terrorism, as well as violent extremism. We know that armed groups, including terrorist groups such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, are financing their activities through trafficking, and that women and girls are used as incentives and rewards for fighters.

On the one hand, it is important to understand that trafficking in persons, in particular of women, girls and children, fuels armed conflict, terrorism and violent extremism. On the other, it is fundamental to ensure the participation of women and girls in the development of anti-trafficking and counter-terrorism strategies and strategies aimed at the prevention of violent extremism.

The Secretary-General's report and his Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism highlight the importance of empowering women as a force for sustainable peace. We believe that the fifth review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy is an opportunity to address this issue.

The list of non-State armed groups engaged in conflict-related sexual violence contained in the current report of the Secretary-General remains long. This underlines the importance of strengthening dialogue with armed groups so as to improve their compliance with international humanitarian law and human rights law. To this end, Switzerland supports, for example, the non-governmental organization Geneva Call, which engages with armed groups so as to enhance the prevention and reduction of sexual violence by having them sign voluntary commitments to abide by international norms.

Switzerland is concerned by the climate of impunity in terms of conflict-related sexual violence. It supports the efforts made by the International Criminal Court and its Prosecutor to fight against impunity for sexual and gender-based crimes. It also advocates for a holistic approach to the treatment of survivors of sexual violence.

Finally, I wish to highlight the importance of broad-based action against trafficking in persons and sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations personnel. We call on the Secretary-General to continue unswervingly to pursue his efforts in this respect. We would recall that it is the responsibility of States to investigate and to prosecute all alleged violations and to bring perpetrators to justice. The Justice Rapid Response roster could be used to ensure that adequate human resources are present to enforce the zero-tolerance policy.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Turkey.

Mr. Begeç (Turkey): At the outset, allow me to congratulate France on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. I would also like to thank the briefers for their highly informative statements.

Today, the severe effects of conflicts in various geographical areas on women and girls continue to constitute a significant problem that must be thoroughly examined by the international community. We consider resolution 1325 (2000) to be an important milestone in terms of addressing the disproportionate and unique impact of armed conflict on women. The international community should pay particular attention to how to prevent and respond to sexual violence, which is often used as a weapon of war and a strategy to deprive human beings of their most basic rights: their safety, security and dignity. These crimes should not go unrecorded and unpunished.

The horrific acts perpetrated against women and girls by terrorist organizations such as Da'esh and Boko Haram require a comprehensive and inclusive approach in order to eliminate the root causes of the problem. This approach should include women's equal and full participation, as active agents, in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peacebuilding and peacekeeping. Furthermore, all actors should take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, in situations of armed conflict.

On this understanding, Turkey actively promotes the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and succeeding resolutions in international forums, including in the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and NATO. Deliberations and efforts are also under way aimed at drafting a national action plan for the implementation of the resolution.

The focus of today's open debate is timely and pertinent. We are witnessing new complexities surrounding the changing nature of conflicts. An increasing number of intra-State conflicts, protracted crises, forced displacements and humanitarian emergencies unfortunately create an environment conducive to the trafficking of women and girls.

Turkey attaches great importance to the fight against human trafficking, which constitutes a violation of human rights and an offence to the dignity and integrity of the human being. Owing to its unique geographical location bridging two continents and with a fast-developing economy, Turkey has lately become a destination country in human trafficking.

In order to reverse this trend, we have introduced numerous administrative and legal measures regarding the main pillars of combating human trafficking: prevention, protection, prosecution and cooperation. Turkey is a party to the relevant international legal instruments to combat human trafficking. The necessary amendments have been made in order to align its domestic legislation with international instruments.

We believe that efforts aimed at providing support to victims of human trafficking are essential. On this understanding, Turkey is providing two main categories of support to victims of human trafficking. The first one is its victim support programme, and the second is its voluntary and safe return programme. Victims of human trafficking can benefit from the support services provided in Turkey upon their consent or can return to their home countries if they choose to do so, on a voluntary basis.

Turkey has also opened women's shelters in various cities in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration and has put into service a helpline for victims of human trafficking.

We are of the opinion that human trafficking cannot be prevented by Governments acting individually. In order to combat human trafficking, a well-designed, coordinated and comprehensive response and international cooperation are required. In this context, acceding to international instruments and their implementation in a good spirit of cooperation and goodwill, using pragmatic approaches rather than strict formality, are essential for success.

Turkey supports the empowerment and well-being of women and girls in various emergency, conflict or post-conflict situations through its comprehensive development assistance programmes. The projects we are carrying out in Afghanistan and Somalia, in particular in the fields of education and health-care services, are concrete examples of our efforts to this end.

As the crisis in Syria enters its sixth year, millions of Syrians, including women and girls, continue to live under the threat of sexual violence. Turkey is making every effort to provide security and safety to Syrian women and girls who have fled the conflict in Syria.

I take this opportunity to mention some of the best practices we have implemented to tackle forms of sexual violence relevant to our debate, based on our experience in responding to forced displacements in our region.

Between 2013 and 2015, a humanitarian aid programme for eliminating and responding to gender-based violence for Syrian women and girls was conducted by the Turkish Ministry of Family and Social Policies in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund. Similar programmes regarding Syrian women and girls in Turkey will continue in the upcoming period.

In terms of participation, we prioritize women's participation in the temporary protection centres, with their inclusion in both decision-making and administration.

With regard to protection, an adequate number of women staff are employed in the centres to maintain quality health, education and security services for women and girls.

On prevention, special measures are in place to prevent assaults within the centres and to protect vulnerable groups. Outside the centres, measures are taken to promote the monitoring and prevention of domestic and sexual violence.

In terms of empowerment, the enrolment of girls in schooling and continuing education for women remains a policy priority.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate our full support for international, regional and national efforts to end sexual violence in situations of armed conflict and to respond to its consequences.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Gata Mavita wa Lufuta (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I would like to thank France for organizing this debate. I also commend Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and his Special Representative Zainab Bangura, as well as all those who spoke before me, for their very useful presentations.

Sexual violence in conflict situations is a scourge from which my country, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, has long suffered. For more than a decade, my country has experienced especially bloody armed conflicts in the eastern part of its territory. Those conflicts, which have caused many human casualties, are at the source of the practice of using rape as a weapon of war. The lives of thousands of girls, women, boys and men have thus been disrupted. The consequences of the situation psychologically, economically and in medical terms are enormous.

This debate affords us an opportunity to once again touch on the efforts of my country's Government to combat this situation. The restoration of peace in the part of the country formerly occupied by rebel armed groups has brought major change. Enormous progress has been made both in the fight against sexual violence and at the level of responding to the needs of victims. In referring to my country, the report (S/2016/361) of the Secretary-General attests to that in mentioning the appreciable 80 per cent decline in the number of cases of sexual violence in conflict areas. Among other things, my Government attributes those results to the following elements: the appointment of a personal representative of the President of the Republic in charge of the fight against sexual violence and the recruitment of children; the adoption of a plan of action to combat sexual violence among the armed forces and the signing of a joint communiqué on the issue between the Government and the United Nations; the adoption of a zero-tolerance policy; and the signing by the Minister of National Defence of a decree on the responsibility of the unit commanders of the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo for combating sexual violence.

All of those steps reflect the will of the Government to end this scourge and honour its international commitments. Against that backdrop, the Government is committed to addressing the various problems, including delivering justice in the fight against impunity. In that connection, 111 cases were decided in 2015 by the military justice system, without regard for the rank of the accused. We have also established a compensation fund, while two Senate committees, on sexual violence and on political, administrative and judicial issues, are working on a bill proposed by the office of the personal representative of the Head of State. On preventing sexual violence, a regional campaign called "Breaking the Silence" will be launched by September. On socioeconomic reintegration, with the collaboration of our national institute for professional training, training was organized at Kibumba last September in various economic sectors for survivors and demobilized fighters. That type of training will continue this year in Rutshuru in North Kivu and in Bunia and Aru in Ituri and will train 2,000 people. A $35,000 credit fund was set up to meet the financial needs of some women in Bunia. That progress has been made possible thanks to the Government's own resources, with the technical support of the international community, including assistance from Japan via Ms. Bangura's office, and the United Nations Population Fund and various other partners.

In conclusion, my country is determined to continue its efforts to completely eradicate sexual violence. We highly value the support provided to us in that regard by the United Nations and the international community.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Qassem Agha (Syria) (*spoke in Arabic*): We have noted with interest the report (S/2016/361) of the Secretary-General presented by his Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Zainab Bangura. We appreciate Ms. Bangura's efforts in that regard, in particular following her visit to the Syrian Arab Republic last April at the invitation of the Syrian Government, which has worked to cooperate and coordinate with her Office and with the United Nations to ensure the success of her important task. We have also worked to set the facts straight and refute all allegations made via media propaganda, which is complicit in the shedding of Syrian blood — an approach adopted by some members of the Security Council for pure political objectives and to demonize the Syrian Government.

The Government of Syria hosted Ms. Bangura and afforded her all the necessary facilities. It opened all doors to its corrections and rehabilitation facilities. It gave her opportunities to meet numerous prisoners who had committed killings, looting and other acts against

Syrian law. All of that was out of the Government's desire to cooperate with the Special Representative. While we see some improvement in this report in the approach adopted by the Special Representative with regard to Syrian women victims of sexual violence, we would nevertheless like to make the following observations.

First, the report does not look into or recount the plight of Syrian women and girls living in refugee camps in neighbouring countries — something that is crucial. In that regard, we must express our deep concern at the ongoing rape of women and the phenomenon of sexual slavery in the camps. We also express our deep sorrow at the continuing trafficking in the human organs of the vulnerable — above all, as that is taking place before the eyes of the entire international community.

Rapes of Syrian women and children, sexual harassment and trafficking in organs also take place in Turkish camps. In particular, according to Turkish news agencies, such crimes have taken place in the Nizip camp, Gaziantep governorate, which, ironically, the Turkish governorate considers a model camp. That was reported by the Dogan news agency as well, while the BirGün newspaper has reported that approximately 30 children between the ages of 8 and 12 were raped, as well as the forced recruitment of young people to join terrorist groups.

Secondly, we reiterate our request that Ms. Bangura's team carry out investigations into the plight of the hundreds of women and girls who have been abducted by the terrorist group Jaish Al-Islam in Adra, in the rural part of Damascus, which has also committed heinous crimes in that town. Jaish Al-Islam has paraded those women handcuffed in iron cages in the town of Duma. That is in addition to other enslaved women taken from areas surrounding Latakia and others killed in cold blood in the Za'ara massacre, which armed takfiris carried out a few weeks ago outside Hama. In our letters to the Security Council, we have appealed time and again for information on the outcome or status of those abducted women.

Thirdly, the report completely disregards the plight of Syrian women in the occupied Syrian Golan and the gross practices against Palestinian women in occupied Arab lands, who are subjected to the most heinous violations of human rights, exclusionary policies and other forms of degrading treatment. Thousands of Palestinian women and girls have fallen victim to the atrocities committed by the wanton regime of the Jewish entity in Gaza and other occupied Palestinian territories.

I am convinced that the members of the Council are well aware of the case of the Palestinian woman who gave birth to her child as she waited hours at a checkpoint of the Israeli occupation forces. I could cite numerous other examples of human rights violations perpetrated by the immoral Israeli regime, which kills and detains children, refuses to allow some 50 Syrian women in the occupied Golan to visit their siblings and other relatives in Syria, and provides ongoing and open support to the terrorist Al-Nusra Front.

To conclude, Syria is committed to supporting all international efforts to put an end to all forms of sexual violence to bring the perpetrators and inciters to justice, and to break the silence and unjustified disregard of many United Nations specialized entities. We stress our desire to continue to cooperate in a depoliticized context. The authorities concerned are ready to provide further assistance with names or incidents to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General so as to ensure the appropriate implementation of her noble mandate.

The President (*spoke in French*): The representative of Turkey has asked for the floor to make a further statement. I now give him the floor.

Mr. Begeç (Turkey): Our delegation has asked for the floor to reply to the statement made by the representative of Syria. In order to do so, I shall read out a section from the report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence. The paragraph concerns the Syrian Arab Republic.

> "The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic reported in September that women, men and children continued to be subjected to sexual violence by Government personnel at checkpoints and in detention (see A/HRC/30/48). The United Nations received accounts of the systematic sexual torture of men in detention centres, including rape with wooden sticks, and electric shocks to, and burning of, genitals. Such sexual torture was aimed at obtaining confessions of the men's involvement in alleged anti-Government activities. In some cases, female relatives were also arrested and forced to witness the torture." (*S/2016/361, para. 68*)

I read out this passage because I want to alert everyone to what the Syrian regime truly represents.

The President (*spoke in French*): The representative of the Syrian Arab Republic has asked for the floor to make a further statement. I now give him the floor.

Mr. Qassem Agha (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): All statements contained in the report on violations of human rights, including those of women and children, in Turkish refugee camps are included in documents issued by the Turkish media. We did not draft those news items. This information has been propagated through social media and at the highest level of the Turkish media.

We underline this request to Ms. Bangura. She knows very well what happens in refugee camps in Turkey and other neighbouring countries. It is written on the wall. I would ask her to cite those instances, too.

The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.